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THE BOMBAY FIELD FORCE, 1880.

M. T. Truoz

# THE BOMBAY FIELD FORCE, 1880.

BY

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR JOHN HILLS, R.E., K.C.B.

LONDON: R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON,  
8, York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C.

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1900.

*As the public have had no explanation of the duties undertaken by the Bombay Field Force in the Afghan Campaign of 1880-81, the following brief report has been written to make known their difficulties, and to publicly refute the insinuations thrown out against their courage and steadiness in the field.*

*Publication was deferred from the end of 1899, as it was held undesirable that it should take place during the absence of Lord Roberts from England.*



# BOMBAY FIELD FORCE, 1880.

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## CHAPTER I.

IN ancient days Tamarlane the Tartar, the most successful and enterprising of all Eastern conquerors, has more than once in his most interesting memoirs related how, before he launched forth into any new enterprise, he carefully worked out in detail all the prospective advantages which he might reasonably expect to result from successful operations. He then weighed in the balance against these benefits the dangers and disadvantages which might arise in the case of receiving a check; the characteristics of the people; the opposition to be encountered; the resources of the country for offence and defence; the difficulties to be surmounted; and, finally, the number and quality of the troops on his side who would have to be put into action in order to establish beyond all doubt the superiority of his arms, and to assure for himself a thoroughly satisfactory result. And he averred that it was only after a most careful consideration of all the attendant circumstances, and after arriving at the conclusion that the advantages derived greatly outweighed the dangers and obstacles on his path, that he entered heart and soul into any project.

He further adds that, as years rolled on, experience made only more manifest, to his mind, the necessity of such preliminary calculations.

In later days, as regards the manner of dealing with native powers, we have the experience and maxims of our most successful soldier, the Duke of Wellington, before us; whose most important rule (one so seldom applied and so little appreciated by the present generation of generals), was that *no matter* how disproportionate the opposing forces might

be, on no account must there be any retrograde movement, or retirement in face of an advancing native army. On the contrary, the smaller and weaker the force, the more *absolute was the necessity* of a bold advance and immediate attack. Any retirement was disastrous and fatal. He himself, in his great victory of Assaye, gave a most practical proof of his own maxim; for, finding himself opposed by an enormously preponderating army, in place of retiring a few miles, whereby he would have been able to effect a junction with another British Force, he boldly advanced, took the initiative, and won a glorious victory.

Still later the records of the previous Afghan Campaign of 1839-40 teach us another important lesson. It is that, while at the outset a numerically weak but well disciplined force could beat down the opposition of the enemy's troops, and was able to occupy the chief cities as Cabul, Kandahar, and Quetta, yet this same force became inadequate to hold the country in military occupation when, some months after, the real dangers and difficulties of the campaign sprang into being, at the time when the fierce, warlike and fanatical tribesman realised that not only a foreign, but an infidel power held their cities and country in subjection. To meet such a general uprising and *Jehad* (in truth a much more formidable matter) a great and immediate increase of the force originally deemed sufficient was absolutely necessary.

This lesson should, by the events of 1879, have still more forcibly impressed itself upon the minds of the directors of the campaign—the Government of India. General Roberts and his army of 7,500 (originally rashly weak) were sent on a most hazardous expedition; but, gallantly led and well handled, they overcame all opposition, and occupied, after a brief struggle, the city of Cabul, and the Arsenal of Bala Hissar, which latter contained an enormous amount of guns, ammunition, rifles, etc., etc. It was a most brilliant achievement, the finest in all the campaign, and yet but little comprehended, or acknowledged by the Government or military critics. Shortly after occupation, however, General Roberts found himself and this grand force wholly unable, from utter inadequacy of numerical strength, to make headway against an assemblage of tribesmen; and he was forced by them,

to the general dismay of the authorities, to retire with all his troops into the Cantonments of Sherpur—happily a strong walled enclosure, in which, moreover, had been stored supplies, guns, etc. There he had to remain, till reinforcements should come up; or the tribesmen disperse of their own accord, from failure of their supplies, or from some other fortuitous chance.

The inadequacy of this picked force of officers and men (as fine soldiers as were in the British army, and now raised to over 10,000 men) had at last (though only after these events had taken place) impressed itself upon the minds of the directing heads of Simla; and they, in accordance with their altered views, issued orders to General Sir D. Stewart to move up with his division from Kandahar to Cabul, and take over the command of the combined forces, 15,000 men and 38 guns at Cabul, and 15,000 men and 30 guns on line of communication.

But even with this numerical strength, that the Government of India were far from being confident in the capacity and power of the Cabul army to cope with all eventualities was unquestionably demonstrated; for in what other way can one explain the nervousness shown in the extraordinary orders issued by them (when they were apprised of the advance of Sirdar Ayub Khan with an army from Herat) to the Officer commanding the Kandahar force (under 4,000 men) that the Government considered it of the *highest political importance* that Ayub's force should be dispersed, and prevented by all possible means from passing on to Guzni.

How was it possible—except from extreme ignorance of the Afghan country, and of the qualities of the people; from utter incapacity for forming judgment, or drawing just conclusions from previous events—that the Government should have been so solicitous of the safety and welfare of the powerful armies concentrated at Cabul, and so strangely regardless of the insecurity and inadequacy of the tiny garrison at Kandahar, holding city and cantonments? They must have been fully aware of the fact that only seven native regiments were holding Beluchistan, Quetta, and the lines of communication. Above all how could the Government possibly expect a brigade of six companies of Europeans, two Native regiments, six guns R.H. artillery, and two weak regiments of Native cavalry,

to possess sufficient strength to stem Ayub's advance, and drive him, his large and well equipped army, and the attendant hordes of tribesmen, off the field ?

The following is a brief summary of the several actions which should have impressed the minds of the Commander-in-Chief and Governing Council at Simla, and regulated their instructions and strategy.

I. On December 13th, 1879, General Roberts, in spite of his so far apparently successful attack on separate bodies of the tribesmen, on receipt of a report that the City had joined the enemy, that the cantonments were threatened, and that the control of the city was lost, ordered General Macpherson to leave a regiment on Darwaza Heights for the protection of the arsenal Bala Hissar, and then to move the remainder of his brigade into cantonments ; similarly General Baker was to leave a detachment on the Takhti-Shah, moving the remainder of his force also into Sherpur. General Roberts (though he had in the meanwhile been reinforced by the Guides Corps) also ordered the garrison at Butkak to march in, and further telegraphed for General Ch. Gough's Brigade to be sent at once to his assistance.

II. Next day, 14th, he despatched General Baker and his brigade, fully equal in strength to that of the Maiwand force of General Burrows, to drive the clansmen from the heights of Azmai, which they had occupied. He assisted this attempt with the fire of four guns, and signalled to General Macpherson to give General Baker every assistance. The 67th Europeans were at once sent in support of General Baker, and guns, etc., were brought into use. At first all went smoothly and satisfactorily ; but by 2 p.m., in spite of the fact that the troops then engaged in action were twice as strong as those of the Bombay Brigade at Maiwand, General Roberts was forced to recognize the fact that he was overmatched, and had to issue orders for the retirement of all his troops, about 7,000 men, within the Cantonments of Sherpur ; giving up the City and Bala Hissar, the latter with its enormous amount of ammunition and arms, to the Afghans.

III. Sir D. Stewart, who had left Kandahar with his division of about 5,000 to 6,000 men on March 30th, 1880, *en route* to Cabul, was, on April 19th, suddenly attacked by



some 4,000 or 5,000 tribesmen—about the same number looking on—and for some considerable time the British force could barely hold its own; in fact it was for a few moments touch and go.

IV. On April 24th, though the division marching from Kandahar was closely approaching Cabul, Colonel Jenkins with 1,200 men was attacked in the Logar Valley, and was forced to remain from early morning till 1 p.m. on the defensive, till General Macpherson with 962 infantry and other troops came up to his assistance. This attack was made on Colonel Jenkins by merely local tribesmen.

These and other similar actions were carried out against local clansmen who had no cohesion, were without any influential or even nominal leader, and had no artillery or even effective firearms.

Hensman, *History of the Afghan Campaign*. "There is no organized plan of attack among them, and unless more determination is shown than that displayed to-day . . ."

The above actions should have fully demonstrated to the Government the enormous numbers and fighting qualities of the tribesmen; and it was unaccountable folly to believe that any small force of 1,500 bayonets (Maiwand Brigade), at a distance of eighty miles from any support, could be capable of resisting an armed and well equipped enemy of over 10,000 men commanded by a Prince of the Royal blood, and assisted, as they were certain to be, by all the fanatical tribesmen of the country.

## CHAPTER II.

WE now enter the second phase of the Afghan campaign. The situation in January, 1880, was the following :—

Sir D. Stewart held Kandahar with a Bengal Division ; Sir F. Roberts, Cabul ; and General Phayre, Quetta ; while to the north-west of Kandahar at Herat, Sirdar Ayub Khan, son of the late Ameer, Shir Ali, and a brother of the deposed Sirdar Yakub Khan, reigned over the only independent portion of Afghanistan. To this place had been attracted most of the Bourakzai and Populzai leaders belonging to the Southern Province, who had fled there on the British force approaching Kandahar. Sir D. Stewart, receiving orders to move on to Cabul, marched from Kandahar on the 30th March for that place, but previously to leaving he installed a native chief, Sirdar Shir Ali Khan, as the Governor, or Wali, of Kandahar and its southern provinces. To support his authority the Government made the Wali a present of 6,000 rifles, one million rounds of ammunition, and a battery of six-pounder guns ; all of which, as might have been easily foreseen, would be used against us should any opportunity of doing so arise. In Sir D. Stewart's hands, and with excellent results, were combined both military and political powers, as should invariably be the case ; but on the arrival of the relieving Bombay Field Force another momentous false step was made when these departments were placed in separate hands. General Primrose was placed in military command ; and the political, or in truth the strategical control of the campaign, was entrusted to a young Major of Engineers, whose last duties had been purely civil (as Principal of a Native College in Ajmere), and to whom, with reference to military rank and experience, not even the command of a regiment would have been granted. The real meaning of such an absurdly foolish arrangement was that the control of the campaign was placed in the hands of the Foreign Secretary to Government, at Simla, as will appear later.

A letter, from the Horse Guards at home, pointed out that all the commands of importance had been placed in the hands of the so-called Indian Service (Sir D. Stewart, Sir F. Roberts, and Sir R. Phayre), and that the British Service had been

ignored; and requested that a so-called British officer should be nominated to the command of the Bombay Field Force—so far a reasonable and equitable arrangement. There were of such, many experienced and capable officers in India, but unhappily, the selection fell on General Primrose, who at the time was commanding a Division at Poona. This officer had been reported to at least one of the members of the Governor's Council to be at that time practically unfit for active service, and he himself, probably recognising that such was the case, was not willing to take command. The two Brigadiers of the Infantry were officers selected from the Headquarters staff of the Bombay Army, the Q.M.G. and the Adjutant-General, both of whose services had been passed chiefly on the staff, and who had seen little or no service in the field.

The third Brigadier, that of the Cavalry Brigade, a good comrade, but possessing no military capacity whatever, as had already been disclosed during the previous year while he was serving under Sir D. Stewart, was again selected for the command of the cavalry brigade; even though he had passed most of his service in Civil employment, in the police, and had never served in the Cavalry.

The force consisted of two regiments European Infantry, three batteries of Artillery, three-and-a-half regiments Native Infantry, two regiments of Native Cavalry, and one small company of Sappers and Miners.

## EUROPEANS.

7th Royal Fusiliers.  
66th Berkshire.

## Artillery:

1 Battery R.H.A.  
1 Battery Field.  
1 Battery Heavy.

## NATIVES.

3rd Sind Horse.  
3rd Bombay Cavalry.  
1st Grenadiers.  
2nd Belooches.  
Jacob's Rifles.  
Half of 19th N.I.  
1 Company of S. and M.

Of the above force, two Companies 66th, the 2nd Belooches, two guns Field Artillery, and one Squadron of Cavalry, were despatched to Khilat-i-Ghilzai to garrison that place, leaving the 7th Royal Fusiliers and six Companies only of the Berkshires, with two-and-a-half Native Regiments of Infantry, to garrison the extensive and undefensible cantonments of Kandahar, and to hold the city and citadel walls of about three-and-a-half miles perimeter—not much less than that of Sherpur, but unlike that place, full of turbulent Afghans.

From the first, in spite of the opinions and reports of the Politicals, the country was unquestionably in a state of ferment and unrest. Dubrai, one of the posts on the line of communications, was attacked and looted. There were risings of the Hotaks in the Turnak Valley, quelled by Colonel Tanner and the Khilat-i-Ghilzai garrison; troubles about Quetta; and Mullahs were everywhere preaching against the Wali. Agitation commenced also in the West, among the Zemindawar tribesmen on the banks of the Helmund, and the Wali had to move his levies in that direction to control and suppress the tribesmen. Finally, to add to all this disorder, at the end of April arrived the intelligence that Sirdar Ayub Khan, the brother of Yakub Khan, the late Ameer, whom we deposed at Cabul, was marching from Herat with a large and well-organized army, and with thirty-two guns, to expel the infidels from the country. His force consisted of four regiments of Cavalry, ten of Infantry, and thirty-two guns, with a numerous following of Irregular Horse and Ghazies.

On the 1st June the Wali and his irregular troops, the latter *reported by the Politicals as trustworthy*, but well known to all others as disloyal and disaffected, were moved to the front to the river Helmund, about eighty miles from Kandahar. Apparently the political idea was that the Wali could not only suppress the agitation in Zemindawar, but was strong enough to meet Ayub Khan in the field. This idea, however, soon vanished into thin air, for on the 27th June, when Major St. John officially announced the advance of Ayub Khan, he at the same time urgently requested General Primrose to send forward a Brigade of all arms to the Helmund, to encourage and support the Wali and his levies.

Curiously enough, an exactly similar incident had occurred at the same place, Kandahar, in the previous Afghan war of 1839-40, but with very different results; though it is to be noted that the opposing force was then not nearly so powerful or so well organized and equipped as that of Ayub. The Political Officer of that day, Sir H. Rawlinson, on hearing of a movement made by an Afghan chief, with some considerable following, towards Kandahar, demanded that a portion of the garrison should be sent out to meet this force; General Nott then in command, a strong and experienced



soldier, refused to entertain this proposition. He stated that the relative strength of the force he could detail precluded the certainty of a decided issue in his favour, while a check, if received by either, involved the fate both of the advanced force and of those remaining at Kandahar. He then assumed the political power, as being, for the time, the responsible head, awaited the closer arrival of the Afghans, and as soon as they came within striking distance, marched out with his whole available strength, attacked, and signally defeated the enemy—a sensible and well executed operation.

On the proposal of the Political Officer becoming known, a strong remonstrance was made by the C.R.E. to General Primrose. He represented not only the numerical inadequacy of the force proposed to be sent out, but pointed out the impossibility of provisioning the troops in the Helmund district for any length of time—which had been proved in the previous year, when General Biddulph was forced, from want of supplies, to return—and the perilous condition in which, with only a garrison of 1200 men of all arms, the city itself might be placed, while the agitation in the surrounding country was certain to increase. General Primrose gave in to the urgent requests of the Political Officer, and proposed to Government to move forward a Brigade; and, at the same time, in order to strengthen his garrison, it was suggested to withdraw the Khilat-i-Ghilzai force and move up the 4th N. I. from Quetta. To the former of these proposals Major St. John, the Political Officer, was averse, and recommended that only one wing of the 2nd Belooches should be withdrawn, but on this being referred to the Government of India they refused to allow a man to be moved from Khilat-i-Ghilzai, so nervous were they of agitation near Cabul.

In sanctioning such a rash forward movement, the Government of India had before them:—

- (1) The reports of General Biddulph of the previous year, as to the country's inability to supply forage beyond a short period, an inability aggravated in the year 1880 by the threatened famine and want of rain.
- (2) The fact that the retirement of General Biddulph's Brigade was followed at once by the general rising up of the Zemindawar and other tribesmen, who attacked him on his retreat.

- (3) The relative strength of the troops who had been in action near Cabul as detailed in previous chapters, and the enforced retirement of General Roberts and his force of no less than 7,500 men before a rising of the clansmen.
- (4) The probable effect upon the country and tribesmen of Ayub's advance and the general unrest prevalent all over the country.
- (5) The utter inadequacy of the force (well under 900 bayonets) which would be left for several days to man the city and hold the Cantonments of Kandahar, a city of 30,000 inhabitants.
- (6) There were only seven Native regiments in Beloochistan and on the line of communications to Sindh—holding Quetta, and protecting also the line of railway under construction in the main gorge. The 15th Queen's and the Battery of Artillery were at Kurrachie in Sindh, and hence little or no reinforcements could be made available in good time, especially as the tribesmen to the north and west of the Bolan and Chummun routes were in a state of ferment and unrest.
- (7) They should have borne in mind, had they known, the arguments employed and actions undertaken by General Nott in the previous campaign of 1839-40.
- (8) And, finally, an experienced Indian official, the Governor of Bombay, Sir R. Temple, had already pointed out the inadequacy of the Kandahar force, and urged the addition of another Brigade to its strength.

Yet on the 1st of July orders were received from Headquarters sanctioning the advance of the Brigade to Ghirisk on the Helmund, 80 miles distant, but with the fatal proviso attached, "that on no account was the Helmund to be crossed." The Commander-in-Chief added that the Khilat-i-Ghilzai garrison, in the line of communications, was not to be weakened, and that troops from the reserve were to be pushed forward at once, as he considered the force proposed to be left at Kandahar *weak in all arms*. This force consisted of one regiment (the 7th Fusiliers) greatly weakened by sickness, and

one wing of Native Infantry—a force hardly adequate to hold a large cantonment and a city of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles perimeter, full of turbulent Afghans, ready to take immediate advantage of any difficulties in which we might become involved.

Notwithstanding this, when General Phayre telegraphed directly to the Commander-in-Chief from Quetta, urgently suggesting the advance of his troops towards Kandahar, he was met with a curt refusal.

Meanwhile crowds of Afghan men and women were daily leaving the city, and the Political Officer was obliged to telegraph on 2nd July to the Government of India: "It is rumoured in the City that talibs are daily taking away arms, packed in bales of merchandise, for the Gurmshel, with the intention of joining Ayub, and the disaffected are plucking up their spirits at the news of Ayub's advance." This information was not submitted to the military authorities at Kandahar.

On the 2nd July, the Commander-in-Chief in India telegraphed that the garrison was to be reinforced by the 15th Foot (East Yorkshire Regiment), one Battery of Artillery (both miles away in Sindh), one Native Cavalry and two Native Regiments. This was not carried out, in fact it was impossible to be done in time as should have been known; for neither carriage for corps nor supplies could be procured at short notice; and nothing should have been attempted or any forward movement made till their arrival had been assured. Only two N. I. Regiments got up from the line of communications, but none of the other troops, except one squadron of the Poona Horse.

In accordance with above instructions a Brigade under General Burrows was detailed for advance, consisting of:—

				OFFICERS.	MEN.
1 Battery Horse Artillery ...	...			5	141
$\frac{1}{2}$ Company Sappers ...	...			1	40
					(Approximately)
6 Companies Berkshire, 66th ...	...			19	540
Jacobs' Rifles ...	...	...		8	603
1st Grenadiers ...	...	...		7	626
3rd Sindh Horse ...	...	...		5	247
3rd Bombay Cavalry ...	...	...		6	297
					2494

Thus, incredible though it seems after all the events which happened during the winter and spring of 1879-80, the force left to garrison Kandahar and as the sole support of the forward brigade consisted only of:—

- 1 Squad. Poona Horse with some details of 3rd B.C. and 3 Sindh Horse.
- 4 Guns Field Artillery.
- 4 Armstrong's Heavy Battery
- 2 Mortars
- 7th Fusiliers not over 550 effective
- One wing 19 N.I.      300

Total ...      850 bayonets.

The C.R.E. writes 4th July: "We are left, the remnants of the garrison at Kandahar, in a very scattered and awkward position—25 here and there, and were an attack made on camp as held at present, serious consequences would result. I have little to do, for no works of any kind are permitted, no expenditure of money sanctioned—quite a wrong policy."

Meanwhile General Primrose states: "The garrison left was of course *very weak*, but the 4th N.I. followed by the 28th N.I. were moving up the line, and I trusted to this being known, and that other troops were on the move to prevent anything disturbing the ordinary state of affairs here."

During these first days had the Sirtip (the Afghan chief, who fostered and promoted the rising of the clansmen near the Helmund) remained in the city, and stirred up the numerous Afghans there to attack and surprise the very small garrison inside it, they must not only have succeeded in capturing the city itself with all our stores and ammunition, but have afterwards, at their leisure, overwhelmed the troops holding cantonments—some 400 Europeans. Then, too, the Helmund brigade would have been helplessly overpowered, and not a man of the force have escaped. Comment is needless.

The above 850 bayonets represented the effective garrison for ten days, from the 4th July up to the 13th and 14th when the head-quarters of the 4th Rifles turned up—and no further reinforcement took place till the 23rd, another ten days, when



the remainder of the 4th Native Rifles came in. On the 26th the evening before the fight at Maiwand three companies of the 28th N.I. appeared, and happily on the 28th (the day after the disaster) the head-quarters of the 28th arrived. So that on the morning when the news of the result of the fight first came to hand, there were only:—

7th Fusiliers	...	...	...	550
19th N.I.	...	...	...	300
4th Rifle	...	...	...	700
28th N.I.	...	...	...	250

a total of 1,800 effective bayonets to take possession of the city; with no possibility of further reinforcements, as no other troops were in movement from Quetta.

General Burrows started, on the 4th and 5th July, with a very large amount of carriage and stores, arrived at Ghirisk on the 10th, and encamped on some low ground, close to and on the left, or eastern, bank of the Helmund River, which was unexpectedly found, on account of the drought, fordable everywhere. The Wali and his men were encamped, on the right or western bank, near the Fort of Ghirisk.

On the 14th July, while General Burrows was shifting camp, to stronger and higher ground, about two miles off and overlooking the river, the Wali troops, who were under previous suspicion, mutinied, and the Infantry and guns went off to join Ayub who, by this time, had approached fairly near the Helmund. The Infantry were followed up and dispersed, some going off to Kandahar and others, the greater part, towards Ayub Khan—the battery of 6-pounders which we had made a present of to the Wali was recaptured.

As had been predicted, at Ghirisk, no supplies became available, and as the General was prohibited from crossing the Helmund to meet Ayub (his only chance of success) he was unable to maintain his force on the river, and received orders to fall back upon Kusk-i-Nakud.

Had he crossed the river, and marched to encounter Ayub, he would, in all probability, have had to engage only Ayub and his army; for the clansmen, seeing his forward march, would have remained quiescent and awaited the issue of the battle. As it was, this retrograde movement, similar to that of the previous year (but worse in effect, from the retirement in front of an advancing force) raised the whole country, and

Ayub was joined by hordes of Ghazies and Zemindawar clansmen who are acknowledged by all Afghans to be the best fighting men in the country.

The Brigade marched from the river on the night of the 14th July, arriving at Mis Karez on the following morning, and at Kusk-i-Nakud on the 17th. On the 19th the Brigade changed ground about two miles to the north, to a site on a level plain near an enclosure of 100 yards square, in which the baggage was placed. Here they remained till the morning of the 27th when the march on to Maiwand, the field of the battle, took place.

In the meanwhile, General Burrows had received the instructions of the Commander-in-Chief; notably the telegram of the 15th July, which seemed to give him a free hand, but was followed and counteracted by that of 21st July, insisting on the necessity for preventing Ayub's move towards Ghuzni.

General Burrows reported "that he found it impossible to obtain any reliable information regarding Ayub's intended movements, for although when the expedition set out, it was understood that he was to operate in a friendly country, and in concert with a loyal army, the actual circumstances were the reverse of this; the Wali's army had gone over to the enemy; the Wali himself was a refugee in camp; whatever little political influence there may have been in the country was at an end, and *every man's hand* was against him." The orders of the Government, not to cross the Helmund, and the retirement of the brigade, from its advanced position on the nearer approach of Ayub's army, had paralysed all efforts made to relieve the situation; and the result, as ought to have been foreseen, was the uprising of the whole country, and a seething mass of Ghazies and clansmen all in arms against us.

On the 26th intelligence was received that Ayub intended marching towards Maiwand, a village about thirteen miles directly to the north of Kusk-i-Nakud, thus completely outflanking the brigade and obtaining a clear and open route for a march on Ghuzni and thence to Cabul. General Burrows then had no option, if he were to follow out the Commander-in-Chief's orders, but to move towards Maiwand, and try at all hazards to intercept the enemy.

General Burrows most pluckily determined to fight and intercept Ayub Khan, and accordingly, on the 26th, issued orders for the Brigade to march next morning at daylight; but owing to the difficulty of unpacking, and then loading up, the stores, etc., out of the confined enclosure, in which they had been placed for over six days, the start was delayed till seven o'clock. And owing to the necessity of allowing the camels to keep up, the pace of the march was very slow. The Brigade halted at Mashed about eight o'clock for half an hour, to enable the baggage to close up, and then continued its forward movement. At the next place, Karezah, intelligence was brought that the whole of Ayub's force was marching also towards Maiwand. The Cavalry, sent out to reconnoitre, found large bodies of horsemen moving in the direction indicated, but the haze, and mirage, and dust of moving troops, prevented any accurate intimation of the strength of the force. The Brigade was then rapidly moved towards the village of Maiwand, in order to place the baggage and its guard within one of the large walled enclosures of the village, but arrived only to find it occupied by large numbers of the enemy. The enemy's Cavalry retired, and then, through the haze, a large body of organized troops were seen to be moving, in a diagonal direction, across the right front. General Burrows states: "It was evident that a collision with Ayub Khan must take place before we reached our destination. It was difficult on account of the haze and dust to estimate the numbers of the enemy, but judging from extent of country covered, I believe I am well within the mark when I set down the strength at 25,000. Advancing on a village about a mile in front (Mahmudabad), I placed my baggage there, and on the higher ground I deployed my Infantry into line in the centre, and the Cavalry on the left, covering movement with two guns R.H.A. and a troop of Cavalry. To the west a wider plain, over which Ayub was moving, stretched away to the low hills, some four miles distant, at the foot of which the trees of the village of Gurmak or Gurmas could be seen by our field glasses."

Hensman. "But on July 14th the plot came to a head, and General Burrows found himself left with a weak brigade alone on the Helmund. Nominally he had been supposed to act

in support of the Wali's army. But *this farce* had come to an end, and his position was defined only too clearly, he had to meet single-handed whatever force Ayub could muster. Our late 'allies' were in the ranks of the enemy, the Wali army had ceased to exist, and the Sirteep's desertion would probably be followed by the rising of the armed peasantry of Zemindarwar and the surrounding districts, for the Sirdar's example could not fail to influence ignorant men. If a chief of such importance had declared for Ayub, surely it would be argued that the British were in great straits. General Burrows was not relieved of his task of 'stopping' Ayub, and there must have been an overwhelming confidence in the mind of the General commanding at Kandahar (and one may add in that of the Government at Simla) in respect of the fighting qualities of the regiments with his absent Brigadier. That there was not the same feeling among the officers of the Brigade is now well known, and one paragraph from the letter of an Artillery officer, dated July 19th, and published soon afterwards is so true an estimate of the situation that I cannot refrain from quoting it. He wrote: 'We are now awaiting for Ayub Khan, who is about thirty miles off, with thirty-six guns and about 6,000 Infantry. It will be a stiff fight if he comes to the scratch, as this is a perfectly open country, and we have only 1,500 Infantry, 500 sabres, and six guns.' This forecast of a stiff fight proved only too true, but instead of only the 6,000 men referred to, our soldiers had to meet in addition a host of irregulars led by fanatical Ghazies."

It must be noted that this march took place in the very hottest time of the year, the *end of July*; that the troops were roused shortly after midnight, and had worked for six hours before they were able to unravel the Laager, etc., load their baggage animals, and make a start about 7 a.m.; that they had a long tedious march of about twelve to thirteen miles with no water; that at the end of the march they were called upon to advance against the Afghans, and though dead beat, and mad with thirst, were kept quiescent and exposed to the direct and enfilading fire of over thirty guns for hours, as well as to the rifle fire of a large force of regular troops; and, finally, were rushed into on all sides by countless Ghazies. The words employed by the Afghan officers were "Be Shumar" (countless).



## CHAPTER III.

## BATTLE OF MAIWAND.

## SIRDAR AYUB KHAN'S Army:—

5 Regt. Cabulees—450 to 500	...	2,350 to 2,500	
1 Regt. Kandahar—450 to 500	...	450 „ 500	
4 Regt. Heratees—400 to 500	...	1,600 „ 2,000	
6 Regt. Wali—250 to 300	...	1,500 „ 1,800	
		-----	6,800 Infy.
32 Guns—500	...	500	500
3 Regt. Regular Cavalry—360	...	1,100	1,100
		-----	-----
Total Regular	...	7,500	8,400
Probably	...	8,000	

1,000 Sowars Luinab.

1,000 Sowars Abdulla Khan.

1,000 Sowars Ahmed Ali Khan.

1,000 Sowars Hashim Khan, who arrived just as the battle was over.

Irregulars, 3,000 Ir. C.

In addition to these, nearly every male capable of bearing arms from Zemindawar, also Ghazies from Farah, Bakwa, Gurmshel, Kakrez, Argandab, and from the city of Kandahar itself. They were so numerous, and so ubiquitous, that they were seen streaming out of Maiwand while our troops were on the march; and, early during the action, they occupied the village of Mundabad and the enclosed gardens in the neighbourhood, and thence were driven back by the Baggage Guard. Mundabad was quite in rear of our attacking line.

Contrast Ayub Khan's force with that of General Burrows.

Burrows' Brigade:—

	OFFICERS.	NATIVE OFFICERS.	MEN.	
R.H.A....	5	—	140	182 Artillery.
6 Pr. (66th)	1	—	42	
66th	19	—	455	1724 Infantry
S. & M.	1	2	40	
1st Grenadier	7	5	626	
Jacob's Rifles	8	14	603	
3rd Cavalry	6	13	297	544 Cavalry
3rd Sindh Horse	5	8	247	

Eighty-four men were on sick list, and about 240 Infantry and a squadron of Cavalry were left in charge of the baggage and stores, leaving—

182 Artillery,  
1,400 Infantry,  
450 Cavalry,

to represent the troops actively engaged in the line of fight, of whom under 400 men were the only European Infantry with the force.

General Burrows, having arrived somewhere about nine o'clock near the village of Mahmudabad, placed his baggage in one of the enclosed gardens, left 240 Infantry, a strong squadron of Cavalry, and two six-pounder guns for their protection, and then gave the orders for an advance. The dispositions of his troops were approximately: on the right, five companies 66th; in centre, six guns R.H.A.; and on left, 1st Grenadiers; the Jacob's Rifles and the half-company Sappers were posted behind the guns in rear, as the reserve. The Cavalry at first on extreme left guarding the left flank of the Grenadiers. In this formation they advanced about a mile over the plain to the westward, towards the foot of the pass through the low hills—nearly at right angles to the original direction of their march, which had been northwards from Kusk-i-Nakud towards Maiwand. Two guns R.H.A., under Lieutenant Maclean, and a troop of Cavalry galloped well to the left front and came into action, but were recalled by the General and placed in centre of line. Soon after the enemy disclosed themselves, large numbers of irregular Cavalry and Ghazies on foot moved down upon his right. To check this (unhappily unaware of a steep dry nullah close to his right flank, which was used by the enemy not only for cover during the action, but also as a safe road to pass by his right flank and get in the rear), the General threw back the 66th a little to the right. When the orders for the brigade to halt and lie down were received it was found that during the march a great gap between the 66th and Grenadiers had occurred; on which the five companies Jacob's Rifles and the half-company Sappers and Miners were pushed forward into the centre of the line to fill this gap. As Ayub was now threatening in ever-increasing numbers to out-flank the left of

the line, the two remaining companies of Jacob's Rifles were then also pushed into the front line, but on the extreme left flank, while the Cavalry were apparently placed some on left flank and some behind the guns in the centre. In this formation all were now placed in front line, there being no second line as support and no reserve.

The Cavalry, instead of being kept together in compact regiments under their commanding officers, and well back and away on the flank, were to a great extent frittered away in troops. For instance, the commanding officer of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry had one troop or squadron, Captain Mayne another, Lieut. Geoghegan another, and a native officer a fourth, etc., as far as can be gathered from reports; nor were they utilized in any way during the action.

Our guns opened fire a little after 10.30. They were not replied to for about half an hour, when five batteries of the enemy suddenly opened fire upon the brigade with fair accuracy. The General, in place of boldly advancing to capture these guns, his only chance of success, made the fatal mistake of halting the line and ordering them to lie down, the 66th on the right in a slight depression 'or dry nullah, and turned to the right flank. Five companies Jacob's Rifles next to their left, then six guns of R.H.A. in echelon of sections, half-company of Sappers and Miners, 7 companies of 1st Grenadiers, and two companies Jacob's Rifles in extreme left flank. Some four six-pounder guns protected this flank, Cavalry were on left flank and also in centre of the line close behind the Artillery and Sappers and Miners.

Under the fire of Ayub's guns the enemy's Infantry, taking advantage of the dry watercourse, advanced within 700 or 800 yards of our line, but were twice checked and driven back, though the haze and dust, which quite obscured the enemy's position and movements, prevented this fact becoming known to the General. Had a forward movement ever been initiated, without doubt they would have given way. They were, but only with great difficulty, brought up again into line, and made to advance when the signal was given for the general forward movement and rush in of Ghazies.

From the first, after Maclean's guns had been recalled from

the left front, that ground had been occupied by Ayub's regular and irregular horsemen, some thousands backed up by swarms of Ghazies. They came on, manœuvring in circles, gradually coming closer and closer, and completely out-flanking the British left. To meet this movement, the two companies Jacob's Rifles were thrown back *en potence*, with the six-pounder guns on their left and some Cavalry close up in left rear, all watching the manœuvres of the enemy's horse and attendant Ghazies.

When the Afghan Commander-in-Chief became aware of the small numerical strength of the force sent to oppose him, the slight extent of ground occupied by them, the paucity of the Europeans, and finally, when he saw the force halt and then lie down, he was delighted, and at once issued orders to have the force "kilabund," that is to say surrounded on all sides, front, flanks, and in rear, and then the enemy were, on a signal being given, to rush in from all sides fearlessly. As he explained, they could not be fired on in all directions.

The concentrated and enfilading fire of over thirty guns told heavily upon the native regiments. The Europeans being sheltered by the depression did not suffer so severely. The Cavalry and 1st Grenadiers suffered much, but the fire told with disastrous effect upon the two flank companies of Jacob's rifles, *en potence*. The one and only European officer in command was early killed by a cannon ball, and the next two senior native officers shortly after, leaving the command of the two companies to one native jemidar, on whom devolved the command of the most exposed and important flank of the line.

In this action the steady refusal of the Government of India to provide a sufficiency of British Officers to the native troops (even though this paucity of officers has been well recognised by all military authorities as a source of weakness and danger) resulted, if not in the actual loss of the fight, certainly in accelerating the disaster. It is impossible to conjecture whether the overwhelming rush of the Ghazies from all sides could have been withstood by the single weak line, but nevertheless the want of British officers materially tended to originate unsteadiness, and was the cause of the disorder of the 1st Grenadiers when they attempted to form their regimental square.



In "Lord Roberts' Life, Forty-one Years in India," page 402, is written :—"The Foreign officers all remarked upon the paucity of our British officers with the Indian Regiments, which I would not but acknowledge, was, *as it still is*, a weak point in our military organization."

Again in page 444 :—

"I thoroughly appreciate their soldier-like qualities (Gourkas, Sikhs, etc., etc.), but we cannot expect them to do with less leading than our own soldiers require, and *it is trying* them too highly to send them into action with the present establishment of British officers." This is the acknowledged and openly expressed opinion of all regimental officers, who have had to command native regiments in the field, but till some further disaster occurs nothing apparently will be done by the Government to provide for the necessary requirements. It has been reported that in the last campaigns twelve or thirteen officers were attached to the regiments sent to the front; if so, such a proceeding must have destroyed the efficiency of all the regiments left in reserve, and left them practically useless; an extraordinary condition of affairs, and one which still remains to be remedied. This is a subject of the highest importance, for, till sufficient English officers are provided, the native regiments cannot, as has been acknowledged by highest authorities, be relied upon to oppose European troops.

As the action progressed, the ammunition of the 6-pr. Battery, which was manned and worked by Europeans (detachment from the 66th) became exhausted, and orders were given for their retirement, a step which had a disastrous effect upon the steadiness of the native troops adjoining. They (the guns) galloped off to the reserve and baggage guard, a mile in rear, in the hopes of finding some more rounds of ammunition.

Previously to this, the two companies of Jacob's rifles, chiefly recruits, and now without any European officer, having become to some slight extent unsteady, had been drawn back in order to form line with two companies of the Grenadiers, who were also thrown back at an angle, *en potence*, to face this greatly threatened flank.

The retirement of the European-manned battery was unhappily shortly after followed by a movement of the Cavalry (who till that time had been supporting the left flank) to their right (it is believed to make a charge). In moving off they left the two Jacob's Rifle companies completely *en l'air*. It seems much for these much-abused native troops, that without a single British officer to encourage them or explain their abandonment, first by the battery, and then by the Cavalry; sustaining heavy and demoralising losses from cannon shot; threatened by swarms of horsemen and Ghazies who had been closing ever nearer and nearer (in spite of the fire brought to bear upon the enemy) to their front, flank and rear; they should, though shaken, have held their ground for a very considerable time, and only finally gave way, when, the concerted signal having been given, the enemy broke in upon them in overwhelming numbers, and rolled them up. Simultaneously the two guns, Royal Horse Artillery, were rushed and captured in another part of the field of action.

Almost at the same moment the whole line was run into by the Ghazies. Thus an overpowering attack was made on every part of the line except that in immediate front of the 66th, whose heavy fire had kept their front fairly clear, and had kept the enemy in the shelter of the dry nullah in their front.

After the 6-pr. Battery had galloped away the regulars of Ayub's army were induced to make a third advance, but only with difficulty were they persuaded to do so; the enemy's guns closed up and all the Ghazies came on closer and closer till the final rush was made, carrying the whole line with them. The two guns, Horse Artillery, in advance in the centre, were captured by the Ghazies, who rushed through an angle unswept by the fire of our troops, and the others only got away in time. The Jacob's rifles were pressed back to the right rear, straight on to the 66th, who then moved off also. Lieutenant Hinde, the Adjutant of the 1st Grenadiers, seeing this rush and forward movement ordered his regiment to fix bayonets and to form regimental square. Had he ordered company squares, a partial check might have been effected. As it was, however, although the regiment was not formed in line, two companies being thrown back, the native company

officers apparently gave their orders as laid down in the drill book for forming from line. Hence the companies became jammed, and an arrow-shaped struggling mass of men were tightly packed together and unable to use their bayonets or fire a shot. The Ghazies taking advantage rushed in and cut them down, practically helpless for a time. Finally the Cavalry made a charge on those Ghazies who were crowding on from the rear and cleared the ground; after which the survivors of the 1st Grenadiers moved off, driving back the mob who had collected in their original rear, and then every now and again facing the Ghazies following them, checked the pursuit. The 66th, dead beat by the heat, and mad with thirst, moved sullenly off the field. The whole force moved off at a walk. There was no rout, no hurry, but all the men were out of hand and disgusted, and dead beat by the heat and thirst, and the officers were unable to hold them together.

General Burrows reports: "Between two and three o'clock the fire of the enemy's guns slackened, and swarms of Ghazies rapidly advanced towards the centre. Up to this time the casualties among the Infantry had not been very heavy (not in the Europeans, but certainly so among the native troops especially those in the left flank). As the men were firing steadily, and the guns were sweeping the ground with case and shot, I felt confident as to the result; but our fire failed to check the Ghazies, they came on in overwhelming numbers, and making good the rush, seized the two advanced guns of the Horse Artillery. With the exception of the two companies Jacob's Rifles, which had caused me some anxiety by their unsteadiness in the day, the conduct of the troops had been splendid up to this point, but now at the critical moment when a firm resistance might have achieved a victory the Infantry gave way, and coming from the left, rolled up like a wave to the right! A glance at the angle in which the line was placed, will fully explain this result. For the line never properly faced the position taken up by the enemy, whose attack was concentrated on the left flank, and rolled up the line from extreme left to right."

General Nuttall, the Brigadier of the Cavalry, writes:—

"It was evident that the immense superiority of the enemy

in numbers had begun to tell with effect, for not only had the enemy's Cavalry swarmed round our left flank, and the Artillery were plying us with a well directed and destructive fire, from front and also from flank (enfilading), but the Ghazies, who had led the van of the enemy's attack from the first, advancing in overwhelming numbers in spite of our Artillery and Infantry fire, and being strengthened by a long line of Infantry a short distance behind them, threatened to outflank our Infantry. Captain Slade had withdrawn some of the guns and moved them to the rear, and shortly after 2.30 p.m. I perceived the Infantry on the left were in a confused state, falling back and then fire slackening. I ordered the Cavalry to form line and by a charge to stem the rush of Ghazies on the Infantry."

That the tribesmen had got round on all sides just before the final movement was proved by the fact that three of the guns of the 6-pr. Battery, under Lieut. Fowle, R.A., having procured a small stock of ammunition, on galloping back to take up their former position, were forced to open fire and come into action when not half way back, in order to clear the ground on each side, and well in rear of our line (R in Plan)—so many of the enemy, in the interval between retirement and return, had got in on the rear of our line and swarmed between the guns and the line. Also by the charge of the Cavalry along the rear of the line, by which charge the Grenadiers stated that they had been materially assisted; by the fact that the baggage guard a mile to the rear had been several times attacked by the Ghazies from Maiwand and Mahmudabad; and by the statements of the Afghans themselves, who said they were ordered to "Kilabund"—surround the force, and then rush in.

The last to leave the line were the half-company of Sappers and Miners. Captain Slade in moving off the field with his four Horse Artillery guns, two having been captured, called out to Lieut. Henn, R.E., that the fight was over, and says the last he saw were the Sappers and Miners rising up and firing three volleys in the face of the advancing Ghazies and then slowly but steadily retiring. Lieut. Fowle, who was the last to leave the field, brought his guns off in safety.



The Native Cavalry have been severely censured. What can be expected from so small and sorely tried a force? They had been kept divided up, idle and inactive all the day, simply moving from one place to another, in rear of, but close to, the Infantry and guns, exposed quite unnecessarily to an extremely severe and converging fire of rifles and round shot. They had had a number of men killed, and horses killed and wounded before the charge they were called upon to make, and did make; but before they had gone 150 yards, they were suddenly in the midst of the charge halted by the Brigadier's orders, and were thus thrown into disorder—it is believed because some one said that the dry nullah was just ahead of the ground over which they were charging. At the final rush in of the Ghazies, large bodies of Irregular Cavalry, backed up by Ayub's Regular Cavalry, came on, at least 3,000 to 4,000 men. The line had gone, and the Cavalry were again called upon to charge, no direction given. They did so, partially turning to the right flank (otherwise they would have charged into the regiment) and cleared the ground in rear of the Grenadiers. They were again formed up, and faced the pursuing enemy, retiring slowly, but ever facing the Afghans. By this time, the two Brigadiers and the Horse Artillery, and remnants of the Infantry were some way to the rear. In fact they remained on the field after the line had dissolved, and should receive some credit for their conduct in unquestionably checking the pursuit at first.

Captain Slade with 4 R.H.A. and Lieut. Fowle with one of the 6-pr. guns, supported by Lieut. E. Montieth and a troop of the Sindh Horse, came again into action on the left bank of the big nullah which had formed the starting point of the advance of the fighting line. There they for some time materially checked the advance of the Regular and Irregular horse of the enemy, and Captain Slade only retired from this position on the receipt of positive orders from General Nuttall.

Had there been any experienced and senior officer present at this juncture, he might have seized this opportunity to collect together and rally the retiring scattered troops on to the guns, and have organised an orderly retreat.

The losses sustained were approximately :—

	ENGAGED.			KILLED.			WOUNDED.		
	OFF.	N.C. OFF.	MEN.	OFF.	N.C. OFF.	MEN.	OFF.	N.C. OFF.	MEN.
Staff ... ..	9	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—
R.H.A. ... ..	5	—	141	2	—	18	1	—	12
3rd Bombay Cavalry	6	12	297	1	—	26	—	—	18
3rd Sindh Horse...	5	8	247	—	—	4	1	—	14
6 Pr. Battery, 66th Europeans	19	—	497	10	—	276	2	—	30
Sappers and Miners	1	4	41	1	3	17	—	1	6
1st Grenadiers ...	8	15	626	2	8	347	2	4	55
Jacob's Rifles ...	7	14	603	3	3	210	1	4	25
	61	52	2452	20	14	898	8	9	160

Of above, 84 men were sick, and about 200 were left as baggage guard, and one Squadron of Cavalry and two 6 Pr.

The wounded were principally those who had been wounded early in the action and got carried away to the rear.

Captain Heath, Brigade Major, Major Blackwood, and Lieut. Osbourne, R.H.A.; Lieut. Owen, 3rd Bombay Cavalry; Colonel Galbraith, Captains Garrett, McMath, Cullen, and Roberts, Lieuts. Rayner, Chute, Olivey and Barr, H.M. 66th; Lieut. Henn and three Sergeants, R.E.; Lieuts. Hinde and Whitley, 1st Grenadiers; Captain Smith and Lieuts. Justice and Cole, Jacob's Rifles, were killed. Captain Harris, Staff; Lieut. Fowell, R.H.A.; Lieut. Monteith, 3rd Sindh Horse; Surgeon-Major Preston and Lieut. Lynch, H.M. 66th; Colonel Anderson and Captain Grant, 1st Grenadiers; Major Iredall, Jacob's Rifles, were wounded. Lieut. Maclean, R.H.A., was wounded, and made prisoner in the retreat.

	HORSES KILLED.		WOUNDED.	
3rd Bombay Cavalry lost	...	58	...	42
3rd Sindh Horse       ,,	...	39	...	17
		—		—
Total	...	97		59

Ayub Khan acknowledges to a loss of 1,500 regular troops, who were twice forced back, and only with difficulty were induced to join in the final assault. They were practically so disheartened, that not one of them opposed General Roberts in the battle of Kandahar on September 1st. He had to contend solely against the clansmen and Ghazies of the

neighbourhood, who, however, by the statement made the day after the fight by Major (now Sir George) White, proved even more determined and stubborn foes than those whom they had encountered at Cabul.

The losses inflicted upon the Ghazies were summed up by themselves as "beshumar" (countless), 3,000 to 4,000, and they added that it took them seven days to bury their dead. There were many personal deeds of valour. Major Blackwood, R.H.A., though early severely wounded in the thigh, after having his wound dressed returned to the line, taking up his position near the last section of his battery. As he had on being wounded sent for Captain Slade to take command, he did not further interfere. He finally joined the last stand made in one of the enclosures, and there lost his life. Lieut. Henn, R.E., though wounded in the arm, remained with his men encouraging them, and he and his men were the last to leave the field. He was eventually, with his English sergeants and men, killed making a final stand near Mahmudabad.

Captain McMath and Lieut. Rayner of the 66th, Lieut. Hinde, the Adjutant of the 1st Grenadiers, and many others sold their lives fighting conspicuously.

The action taking place forty-five miles from Kandahar in the midst of an hostile population, with men overcome by the awful heat and thirst, entailed a heavy list of casualties, but over 350 bodies were found lying in the line of action, chiefly of the Native troops, and were there buried. (See plan A.)

A final stand was made by about 145 men and officers, seventy of the 66th, sixty Natives, and fifteen officers, who were cut off and took up a position in a walled garden, and there defended themselves till time of evening prayer, when at last twelve or fifteen only were left. These charged into the mass of Ghazies and died fighting, causing, according to an Afghan General of Artillery, a loss of over 700 men.

The following are the comments of His Excellency the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief at Simla on the despatches of the fight at Maiwand :—

"The Viceroy condemns the despatches as meagre and unsatisfactory, and as leaving the Government in ignorance of the true facts of the case and the real reason of

the reverse. Lord Ripon will wait for General Roberts' reports before they decide on the further course of fresh enquiry. He commends the conduct of the 66th and artillery."

The Commander-in-Chief says, "The despatches are eminently unsatisfactory as giving no facts as regarding the precautions taken to ascertain the strength and position of Ayub Khan, and as completely failing to explain the reasons of the disaster. He believes that victory was possible had the Infantry stood firm, and that the disaster was intensified by the demoralization of the Cavalry and the precipitous retreat, when the enemy followed for three miles. The cantonments ought never to have been abandoned on a false report of annihilation."

To answer the last of these extraordinary animadversions. The cantonments at Kandahar are about 1,000 to 1,200 yards from the city walls, and are of great extent. Their position, moreover, in a military point of view, is as bad as bad can be, and quite undefensible. There is not a drop of water near, and they are completely commanded by the picquet-hill, which runs parallel to them at a distance of 500 or 600 yards, and lies between them and the water supply; further, being built of mud they are of no value. General Primrose, though in opposition to some of his staff officers, was in this instance undoubtedly right in withdrawing into the city, and in letting everything else (only some baggage) slide. With his weak numbers it was imperative to secure first the city and citadel—to man and hold the gates—the more so as the city was known to hold many Afghans ready to rise against us.

The news arrived about 3 a.m. that the army, forty-five miles away, had been disastrously beaten, and as they had to retreat through an hostile country many could not be expected to get back. At Kandahar the total garrison,\* which should have been fully known to the Commander-in-Chief, comprised

\* KANDAHAR GARRISON.

7th R. Fus.	...	...	550
19th N.S.	...	...	300
4th Bombay Rifles	...	...	700
2 Compys. 28th N.I.	...	...	250
<hr/>			
Total	...	...	1,800



a total of only 1,800 bayonets. General Primrose commanding, ordered a force of all arms, of 400 to 500 men under General Brooke, to proceed to Kokeran on the Argandab in order to give a hand to any stragglers from the beaten army. He had then about 1,200 men left to hold the cantonments and the citadel and city of Kandahar, which has a perimeter of at least three and a-half miles of walling, and which was full of turbulent Afghans. The six gates of the city were open in rear, and fully commanded by every adjacent house, the citadel walls were breached, nothing had been done to place the walls, etc., in a state of even decent repair by either Sir D. Stewart or General Primrose.\* The authorities at Simla can have no excuse or grounds for cavilling, for they, and they only, were responsible, as they were fully aware of the fact that they left this place from the 5th to the 14th with not 900 bayonets, from the 14th for another ten days with 1,500, and finally, on the morning of the 28th, with 1,800.

As to the disaster at Maiwand, what further explanation can they desire?

General Burrows had received orders that it was of every importance not to allow Ayub Khan a free passage to Ghuzni. He had been ordered to retire to Kushinakud, and the river Helmund being fordable everywhere, Ayub marched to Maiwand. In so doing, he not only outflanked the General but secured from thence an open road to Ghuzni. There was nothing left to be done for the unhappy General Burrows, but to march there in haste and intercept him. This was done. As to the details of the battle, a weak force of under 1,500 bayonets in line, one Battery of Horse Artillery and one useless six-pounder battery, are pitted against 7,000 regular well armed troops, thirty-two guns and 1,000 regular cavalry, and hordes of irregular horsemen, and thousands of clansmen and Ghazies, reckoned at about at 25,000. The 1,500 men commanded by an inexperienced leader are all placed in one and first line, are submitted for over three hours to a concentrated and enfilading fire of rifles and guns, outflanked by swarms of horsemen and Ghazies, and at last, when dead beat, and weakened by heavy losses, are rushed on all sides by the thousands of Ghazies backed up by the regulars, whom neither the fire of

\* See C.R.E. Letter, page 14.

the artillery or infantry are able to check. What more could be expected of the best troops in the world ?

General Roberts in his book writes concerning the attack on Sherpur :—

“ An hour later, however, the assault grew hot as ever, and finding we *could not drive the enemy back* by any fire which could be brought against them from the defences . . . ”

Similarly, it may be pointed out that at Tamai in March, 1884, a force or Brigade, consisting of three regiments of Europeans, the 42nd, the 65th, and Marines, assisted by a portion of the Naval Brigade with three Maxim guns, in all about 1,600 Europeans, were attacked by a crowd of fanatical natives; that they were driven back some hundred yards into an utterly confused mass; and were probably only saved from disaster by the flanking fire of a battery of Artillery as well as that of the musketry fire and support of the Second Brigade, who doubled up to their assistance, and further by the fire of our Cavalry, which first checked, and then broke up the mass of the assaulting enemy.

Hensman.

Cabul, 11th December, 1879. “ But on the 11th there followed the defeat of our Cavalry and the temporary loss of two guns; that afternoon was really most pregnant with danger to the cantonments.”

14th. “ By dusk everyone was in cantonments, and we could count our casualties. They were unusually heavy for Afghan fighting, but have given us valuable experience, as we no longer despise our enemy. That Afghans, when in *overwhelming numbers*, will fight and rush *blindly on, regardless of life*, has been full exemplified, and we shall no longer send flying columns (which were in strength fully equal to that at Maiwand) over the hills.”

With such examples as above, what more could be expected of so small a number of troops out in the open without any support or reserve to fall back upon ?

There is a limit to all endurance, and this limit was unquestionably exceeded at Maiwand. The great wonder is, in reality, how any escaped; of the Infantry the chief survivors were those who had been on the baggage guard.

On those who directed the movements, on those who sanctioned the advance of the Brigade, and its consequent retreat from the front, should any stigma, if there be such, be fixed. The disastrous ending and the enormous expenditure of the campaign are unquestionably due, not to the actions of the Bombay Field Force, but to failure in the application of the ordinary rules and requirements of warfare on the part of the Council at Simla, who usurped all authority and management.

While the chief and most fatal error was unquestionably the utter inadequacy of the numerical strength of the force, there were many concomitant causes and blunders which precipitated the result. Principally the apparent ignorance of the General of the most important of all of the maxims of the Duke of Wellington. In any condition or position in which a General encounters a superior force of natives his only hope of success is to advance boldly and capture the guns, all other matters being quite subordinate.

On the day of the action so far, everything was given in his favour. He intercepted Ayub's army on the march; an advance then would have probably crumpled up the Afghan regulars in detail. Even when the guns opened fire at a range of 800 yards at the most, a quick advance with a force armed with breech loaders might have effected the capture of the guns. The *éclat* of such a movement, and the despair of the enemy on the loss of the guns might possibly have turned the tide in our favour—possibly so, but there still remained the countless hordes of Ghazies and tribesmen to be dealt with, a far more formidable force to be encountered and beaten.

But it may be safely averred that nothing would have been able to stem the simultaneous and overwhelming rush of the tribesmen from front, flank, and rear, forcing the left flank companies on to their right, and then backwards on to the Europeans. A casual inspection of the position occupied fully explains this.

## CHAPTER IV.

BETWEEN 2 and 3 a.m. the first news of the Maiwand defeat arrived at Kandahar. Preparations were at once made to abandon the cantonments which were undefensible, and had no water supply whatever, and to concentrate the small force (under 1,800 effectual bayonets) in the city and citadel. At the same time a small force of all arms was sent out at daylight under General Brooke, on the Kokeran road, to keep it open and the villages clear, and thus assist in succouring any stragglers from the defeated Brigade. It was known that the houses near the Mosque on the north-west quarter of the city had been barricaded, and, after the occupation of the city had been accomplished, it was discovered that the greater portion of the south-east quarter had been prepared for an *émeute*.

The prompt action of seizing the gates and city walls, and the arrival of the Head-quarters of the 28th N. I. about 9 a.m. that morning, added to the security of the garrison. Some of the Staff wished to hold the cantonments that night, but unquestionably in regard to the enormous responsibility of securing as far as he was able the city, well-known still to contain a large number of turbulent Afghans, the General acted in a correct and prudent manner.

Transport supplied to General Stewart for his march to Cabul, followed by the demands for the march of General Burrows' brigade, and its fifteen days' supplies and stores, had reduced the transport at Head Quarters to a very inefficient condition, and most of the animals left were weak and sickly. The Director of Transport had, moreover, been obliged, in default of Indian camel drivers, to enlist Afghans in their place. The consequence was that when transport to bring in the baggage of the troops from the cantonments were sent out, the Afghan drivers bolted, carrying off or abandoning numbers of camels, etc., and hence occurred the loss of the baggage of the men quartered in cantonments, as practically no transport was obtainable.

These troops had been ordered early to fall in without delay at an appointed rendezvous, and did so with alacrity, leaving their baggage behind. This loss, though of very



trifling consequence, and chiefly due to the fact that no transport was forthcoming, was made much of by the detractors of the Bombay Army.

The garrison at Mundi Hessar was ordered in, those further off sent back to Chumman, and it was decided that as the Head Quarters of the 28th Native Infantry had come in about 9 a.m. the garrison at Khelat-i-Ghilzai should be left there, though it would have unquestionably strengthened the Kandahar garrison (even now too small). This fact alone is a sufficient proof that there existed no hesitation or want of confidence in the power or capacity of the force, such as it was, to hold the city against the enemy till relief arrived.

Arrangements were quietly made as the troops entered to distribute them into their appointed quarters, and by evening, when the remnants of the defeated Brigade and the small force sent out to assist them came in, all was satisfactorily arranged. The gates were closed, and barricaded, and the walls patrolled.

On the 29th the work of clearing and strengthening the defences, putting up ramparts, cutting down walls, and levelling enclosures, many close to the city walls, was commenced, and was carried on throughout the nominal siege. This work should unquestionably have been done during the previous year when General Stewart held Kandahar, as it is surely the duty of any General occupying a foreign country to put the defensive places in thorough order, in order to meet all contingencies.

General Primrose, a weak officer, followed this example, and in spite of the representations of General Brooke and the C. R. E. nothing was allowed to be done. A great number of Afghans with their families were turned out, the citadel walls being lined by the troops in case of any disturbance. A telegraph line was laid round the city walls connecting all the principal posts.

30th. Three small working parties were employed in demolishing walls, etc., in the immediate neighbourhood of the Eedgah, Cabul and Herat gates. Orders were issued detailing officers and troops to their respective posts, regiments being told off to certain portions of the city walls, two 40-prs. placed in position on angles of the city and a 9-pr. on the Herat gate. Many more Afghans turned out of the city.

31st. Two companies of 28th Native Infantry, some Cavalry, and one company 7th Fusiliers were sent out to attack and clear the village and Ziarat of Khairabad, on the North-Eastern front. They cleared the place with slight loss, killing about fifty Afghans, and on the 3rd August the final exodus of the Afghans, under penalty of death, was insisted upon. Altogether from 8,000 to 10,000 at least were turned out (Political estimates 15,000) and the city made safe from treason or internal trouble.

From the 31st onwards every day the defences within were strengthened, gateways put in order, ramparts thrown up, traverses made, city walls loopholed, etc., etc., and all cover outside, of which there was an enormous amount, was daily removed under protection of covering parties. Each one of the working parties was exposed to a very severe and galling fire, happily badly directed, of the enemy, who, on the other hand, well hidden under cover and behind loop-holed walls and gardens, were able to fire carefully and safely.

A strong entanglement of wire obtained from the Telegraph Department was laid by them round the city walls outside the ditch, and abattis put across the approaches to the gates, thus completing the defence of the city against any assault.

Major Leech, Captain Cruickshank, Lieuts. Turner Jones and Waller were the only Royal Engineer Officers available for duty; and they bore the brunt of all these doings, as they were out every day and all day. Two, Lieuts. Turner Jones and Waller, were recommended for the V.C., which they richly deserved. Captain Cruickshank was unhappily killed on the 16th at Deh Kojah, while leading the attack through the village. Several times the fire of the enemy from the open water Karezes, and the walls of the neighbouring gardens, etc., was so heavy that the working parties were recalled by the General, only to have the half finished work done over again. In no siege in history has it been necessary for the defenders to sally out by daylight each day and remove walls, fill up ditches, and demolish cover, outside the defences of an invested town, and in so doing be exposed to the fire of the besiegers. The converse has been always the case, and it says much for the troops that they proceeded cheerfully to carry out their work, often forced to turn their backs to the fire of the enemy while working or

pushing the high walls down. And this not for a day, but daily for three weeks, happily with a loss of only twelve men killed and forty wounded.

On the 5th, advanced guards of Ayub's Army arrived, accompanied by crowds of the Ghazies, and occupied in force the villages on the east and south face, as well as the cantonments. He pitched his first camp behind the Picket Hill; a reconnaissance made one morning followed by the fire of our guns forced him to change his camp to a position near old Kandahar No. 2 Camp.

On the 12th, while working parties were employed at the south-east angle to clear the garden walls, a heavy fire was brought to bear upon them from a high walled, loop-holed garden, within 150 yards. Captain Adderley and twenty men (7th Fusiliers) under the direction of Lieut. Waller, Royal Engineers, rushed across the intervening 150 yards, burst through a small entrance gap and drove out the regulars holding the garden, killing eighty of them; Lieut. Waller killed the Commander Afzul Kan, a chief of note from Farah.

No more gallant action was ever done in warfare. Captain Adderley received it is true a well earned Brevet Majority, but neither Lieut. Waller nor the men have received the slightest acknowledgment of their gallant action. Shortly after, on the same day, Lieut. Waller and Lieut. Turner Jones, R.E., with a Corporal of the 7th Fusiliers went, under heavy fire, to bring in a wounded native soldier who had been overlooked. The Corporal was unhappily shot dead, but the two officers brought in his body and also the wounded native; they were recommended for the Victoria Cross, but with many others, were passed over, though twice in one day did Lieut. (now Major) Waller fully deserve the reward for personal valour.

In the meanwhile the Afghans had opened fire from guns on Picket Hill, from the trenches south of the Sikarpore gate, and from Deh Khwaja, and were steadily encroaching and advancing in their investment, utilizing the numerous Karezes as parallels and mounting guns here and there. On the 13th they re-occupied the village of Khairabad in force, firing on the front of the Eedgah gate, by which hitherto the animals had been watered, and from which strong patrols of Cavalry were daily sent out to keep the north front open. On

noting this occupation the General was desirous of closing this gate, and thus giving up this front, hitherto kept open and clear for our own uses.

On the 15th the C.R.E. having reported that the city had been put into quite a safe state of defence, obtained with the greatest difficulty the sanction of the General to make a sortie from the Eedgah gate in order to clear the village of Khairabad and Deh Khwaja. His arguments were briefly that it was imperative to keep the north front and the Eedgah gate open; so long as these were retained, we were masters of the situation, and were not invested, could move off if necessary to Quetta, make a counter flank attack upon any attempted assault, and any day employ our Cavalry and Infantry when and where we pleased, etc. We obtained a plentiful supply of water, not only for the cavalry but for all the transport and other animals, and deposited our filth and rubbish in trenches dug outside the walls, a great sanitary precaution.

The arrangements of the sortie as then determined with the C.R.E. were: before dawn a strong force of Cavalry was to start from the Eedgah gate, move round clear of the villages of Khairabad and Deh Khwaja, and take up a position on the south of the latter, in order to cut up any reinforcements attempting to come to the assistance of these villages from those outside. There was on no account to be any attempted bombardment or firing, but the two or three guns on the eastern face were to be trained so as to support the Cavalry. The village of Khairabad was to be rushed at dawn by three Infantry regiments, the 7th Fusiliers, the 4th and 19th Native Infantry; and as soon as the village was cleared the troops were then to swing round and attack the north eastern angle of Deh Khwaja. Two field guns were then to take up a position on a small conical hill between the two villages, and bring an enfilading fire along the front of the village. The attack was to be concentrated on one point, and kept well together and in hand, with no detachments, the 1st regiment leading the 2nd in immediate support, the 3rd in reserve. All were to come straight through the village from north-east rear to south-west front, and thence on to the Cabul gate, capturing on the way any guns, but not attempting to hold the



village. It was a *sortie*, which may be explained to be a force sent out by the defence to carry out a certain determined duty, and having done so to return as quickly to their posts; not an *attack* to obtain possession, as apparently had been generally accepted. The main object of C.R.E. was to clear the north front of the city and demoralize the men detailed to hold the exposed flank of the Afghans on the north-east angle.

Unhappily the General held a council of war on the same afternoon, in which however, strange to say, neither the C.R.E. nor the Assistant Adjutant General took a part. The General informed the officers that he had settled that there should be a *sortie*, but permitted General Brooke, a gallant soldier, but inexperienced officer, who had been nominated to the command of the *sortie*, not only to alter the original plan, but, curiously enough, to reverse every single item of the dispositions, excepting the duty of the Cavalry previously agreed to.

He insisted on having an hour's bombardment. The Assistant Quartermaster General, who happened to be present, though taking no part in the proceedings, urged the inadvisability of this, but was at once silenced. Khairabad was not to be proceeded against. Instead of three regiments of Infantry, three detachments of about 300 men each (each detachment composed of one company each of the 7th Fusiliers, the 28th Native Infantry and the 19th Native Infantry), were to form the force. In place of moving out before day break the advance was not to be made till an hour after dawn; after the bombardment. In place of the north-east angle of the village the south-west angle was to be the point of entrance. Instead of one concentrated assault there were to be two places of entry, and in place of moving out of the Eedgah and open gate and over the front, and then driving through the village from the east towards the Cabul gate, the two detachments were to go out of the Cabul gate, well exposed to fire, to work their way from south-west to north-east and to return again to that gate.

The bombardment took place, and aroused the whole country. After an hour the advance was made under a galling fire from the start. The two separate bodies of 300 men each made for the village under the immediate leadership of General



Brooke, and entered in two directions, one working due east, the other through the village northwards. The reserve of 300 men was left behind at the gate without any orders and remained there useless for a long time; then at last it was advanced to within 300 yards of the centre of the village and there remained. When General Brooke had pushed through and arrived close to the north end of the village, he sent in for a further supply of ammunition. He had up to this time lost but few men. On receiving this request General Primrose, losing heart, ordered the retreat to be sounded. On hearing the retreat sounded from the city General Brooke sent orders round for such a movement to be carried out; unfortunately the Cavalry, who should not have been withdrawn till all the Infantry had evacuated the village, on receipt of the above order, retired at once. This was the opportunity given to the crowds of men who had been kept completely in check and had lost heavily (several being chiefs and men of importance) to press forward in hundreds into the south-west point of the village, and re-occupy those portions which had previously been cleared by our troops. The 7th Fusiliers and some others came out on the northern side, having gone through; others who had been moving to the east came back through the middle; General Brooke, unaware of the re-occupation of the cleared portion, elected with about 200 men, and with the wounded, to return by the route by which he had advanced.

He again forced his way through and arrived outside, but unhappily, instead of pressing on for another 100 yards where he could have obtained better cover, he halted his men in a small dry ditch, or karez, not more than 120 yards outside the village. This rest, short as it was, was sufficiently long to collect crowds of the enemy on the spot. They opened at once a very heavy fire on our men, and the chief loss of the sortie occurred here, for General Brooke and several others were shot down, as they rose out of the karez to make for the next cover. There was a rush by Ghazies on the retiring force, but the latter turned round, faced the Afghans, and drove them sharply back to cover by some well-directed volleys; and the sortie was over.

Unskilful, and in opposition to all tactics as the conditions of the sortie were, there is very little doubt that General

Brooke and his troops would have come out at the north end with but slight loss, had not General Primrose ordered the retreat to be sounded. The withdrawal of the Cavalry was the main cause of the losses sustained.

General Brooke, who throughout acted in a most gallant manner, and who eventually lost his life in trying to save that of a brother officer, and other wounded men, was killed, as were Colonel Newport, Major French, Capt. Cruickshank, R.E., Lieuts. Marsham and Stayner. Colonel Nimmo, Colonel Malcolmson, Major Vandeleur, Colonel Shewell, Rev. W. Gordon, and Lieut. Wood were wounded. Total, seven officers and 96 men, 37 horses killed, and six officers, 90 men and 35 horses wounded. The enemy's losses were reported to be extremely heavy, including many men of importance.

What more perfect refutation can be given to the statements of Lord Roberts than the above sortie? Would it be possible for any leader to induce a small force of 600 men taken from *demoralized troops* to move out of a city, exposed to a galling fire from the gate, advance across an open zone of fire, then storm and push through a large village full of Ghazies and regular troops, and on retreat being sounded come away in steady skirmishing order back to the city? It is scarcely necessary to ask such a question.

Hensman. "The withdrawal of the original supports and cavalry before General Brooke's party had left the village was the fatal mistake of the day."

"There is no charge against the soldiers, as all are said to have *fought well* and to have shown *great steadiness*, but the departure from the original plan was fatal, and no support being left for General Brooke's party to fall back upon gave the enemy the chance of cutting our men up in detail. I have been through Deh Khwaja and over the ground outside, and can fully appreciate how General Brooke failed to make good his hold of the village." It may be noted that it was not intended to hold possession of the village; *it was a sortie*—made simply to effect an object, and then retire to cantonment.

Though this sortie had been carried out dead against the expressed conditions which had been laid down by the C.R.E., and though—while in progress—it had been to a great extent fatally interfered with by the General commanding, the

results not only justified the undertaking but fully satisfied the exigencies of the case. At nine o'clock that morning there was a thorough clearance of all the tribesmen and troops out of the village of Khairabad, all idea of giving up the control over the north front was given up, and the Eedgah gate was once more kept open by the General. All the Ghazies from the east, from Chumman, etc., cleared out. The Zemindawar and distant tribesmen left in great numbers, and the regulars themselves were mutinous, and demanded to be withdrawn from Deh Khwaja, as they had received no assistance. The inhabitants of the village left, and it was tenanted by not one fourth of its former number of the enemy. Ayub Khan and his army remained under arms for the two following nights, expecting an attack; and though some works were carried on by the enemy for a few days on the south-western and western front, and some shots were fired by their guns from Picket Hill, and from a battery placed in a karez near the General's garden, no further effort was made; and the siege practically came to an end, as both Ayub and the tribesmen fully perceived that their hopes of the capture of Kandahar had dissolved into thin air.

Dissensions and quarrelling broke out in Ayub's camp. He desired to go off to Herat, recognizing his inability to remain. The tribesmen of the neighbouring villages who had all been implicated in the murder of stragglers from Maiwand, fearing our vengeance, objected to Ayub's retirement, and to being thus left alone to bear the brunt of our vengeance.

They determined to prevent his departure, and did so. Ayub finally hearing rumours of the march of a force from Cabul on the 22nd, left his position near old Kandahar, and moved to one behind the Pir Paimal.

The tribesmen followed him, surrounded the place, and kept him an unwilling prisoner. On the 23rd every village and hamlet, the cantonments, etc., were evacuated, and not a sign of an Afghan was to be seen, excepting in the villages well to the south, for a radius of some miles. The chief part of the clansmen occupied the ground situated on the banks of the Argandab river, and between Ayub and Herat. This investment of Ayub by his own people, and the fact that the Bombay force still held the city and the country at

and around Khelat-i-Gilzai, were in truth the main cause of General Roberts meeting with no opposition, and greatly eased and paved the way for the rapidity of his advance. But for these two important factors he would have met, as General Stewart had previously met, with sufficient opposition to have impeded his march; and great difficulties and delay would have arisen in the effort to obtain the necessary supplies and fodder for his troops in a country which had been previously overrun by the enemy and tribesmen.

General Roberts and his powerful force, including also the garrison of Khelat-i-Ghilzai, arrived at Kandahar on the morning of the 31st August; a reconaissance was made that evening, and the enemy were attacked the following morning, September 1st, with complete success. Ayub Khan and his regulars took no part in the action, and the moment the tribesmen's attention was fully occupied in opposing the British army, they slipped off and bolted; they never intended to fight, for the regulars had suffered so heavily at Maiwand, and were there so practically beaten, that they never came to the front again.

The British Army was opposed by only six guns and about 10,000 to 12,000 of the tribesmen. These latter, however, fought obstinately, but were easily defeated and driven off with a loss of about 1,200 men. All Ayub's camp, equipped guns, etc., were captured, and the campaign ended.



## CHAPTER V.

## PECULIARITIES OF THE DEFENCE OF KANDAHAR.

THE defence of Kandahar and the operations carried out therein form quite a unique precedent in siege history—and by their incidents present the most perfect refutation to Lord Roberts' animadversions on the honour and courage of the troops forming the defence.

At Sherpur, not only was the British force of nearly double the numerical strength, but it was well-furnished with guns, ammunition, park stores, and equipments, Engineer officers and Sappers and Miners. It was opposed by an enemy who had not a *single gun* as far as one can ascertain, no regular troops, and but few rifles. The interior of the cantonment of Sherpur was comparatively open, and thus free for movement; not cramped by a city of houses with narrow tortuous alleys impeding any free action or movement from one part to another.

A very different case was represented at Kandahar, the Headquarters of the Bombay Army against the remonstrances of the C. R. E. ruled that any field-park or stores were quite unnecessary; and of three small companies of Sappers and Miners who were sent to the front, two were detained to work on the Hurnai Railway, and only one of about eighty men was allowed to the Field Force—though this was also remonstrated upon by the C. R. E. Of this eighty half were killed at Maiwand; and hence the Engineer Staff at Kandahar numbered, including the C. R. E., five officers and about thirty effective men, with no tools in Park and one hundred pounds of powder, to conduct the defence of a large city. It is true that when the Bengal force moved out of Kandahar towards Cabul they left some rubbish behind, but it was mere rubbish, and perfectly useless.

There were twelve guns in all, four big ones, one placed at each corner bastion; six guns, one at each of the six gates; and



two guns in reserve to defend a long line of some 6,400 yards of defence, a very poor show. The upper light wall, over the main thick walling or rampart, was already tottering—the very height and thickness of the main wall was a source of weakness rather than of strength—the numerical strength of the garrison quite inadequate, while the citadel itself had a huge breach in its walled rampart.

The enemy were of quite a different calibre from those at Cabul. They were commanded by a Prince of the royal blood, and had organized leaders, and regular troops armed with rifles quite equal in penetration and power (except that they were not breech-loaders) to those supplied to our native troops. They had thirty-four to thirty-six guns, some of heavy calibre, and well-trained artillerymen, these forces being supplemented by all the chiefs and tribesmen of the country working together in harmony.

In close proximity to the city walls, especially on the southern and western sides, was any amount of cover. Dry water karezes formed excellent parallels of attack; huge garden walls and walled enclosures were scattered all over the ground in close proximity to the city walls; and had Ayub by any chance occupied these places in strength and utilised the dry watercourses for parallels of attack the defenders would have been placed in a troublesome position. A battery of four or six guns placed to enfilade the lines of defence would, with a very few salvos, have brought down the tottering top wall and left the high, and then useless, main wall utterly exposed to enfilade and ricochet fire.

Further, these batteries might have been supplemented by two others placed a little on each side so as to take the exposed walling of defence in reverse, and so have made the line of city defences decidedly unpleasant. His regular troops with their rifle fire over the open wall would also have entailed loss. In fact, an enterprising general would have been able to get close to the corner bastions without difficulty or much hazard.

The usual dilatoriness of native armies and the unqualified ignorance of the Afghan leaders happily gave the garrison time to clear off the walls and fill up the karezes, before the Afghans had to any extent formed the rough parallel of attack described by Mr. Hensman. The three or four guns

they put in position were stupidly placed to fire directly upon the gates, and were hence of no import.

The history of all sieges may be said to assume the same practical features. The attacking forces drive those of the defenders inside their ramparts, and invest the place so as to prevent all succour. They then break ground by digging entrenchments called parallels of attack opposite the quarter they have determined upon as most feasible. From this parallel they push forth others nearer and nearer the doomed city, throwing up batteries as they advance till about the 21st day, an average duration of time, they have worked close up to ramparts and are able to breach and mine the ramparts and assault the city.

In this breaking ground Engineer officers are sent out to lay out the direction of these entrenchments, and then strong working parties under the protection of other troops move out in silence *during the night*, and commence work under cover of the darkness, so that they may have by daylight dug sufficient cover for themselves before the discovery of their work by the defenders.

All the advances and batteries are also thrown up at night. The role of the defence is to impede and interrupt the progress of these works by the fire of their guns, and by numerous sallies or sorties, which attempt to destroy some of the works or batteries, spike guns, etc., always retiring hastily within the walls whenever discovered or resisted in strength.

These sorties are also invariably entered upon at night, and as a surprise.

The siege of Sebastopol furnishes plenty of examples of this kind of warfare.

What particularly demands notice in these affairs is the fact that the work is invariably done *at night* under cover of the darkness and in silence, as to attempt anything *in daylight*, even by the attacking force, is considered to expose the troops too hazardingly.

But at Kandahar was undertaken quite a different rôle: one, as before stated, quite unique in history. In place of the attack sending out working parties, the *defence* did so twice a day daily for fourteen or fifteen days. In place of

working *at night* under cover of the darkness, the work was done in *open daylight*.

Working parties issued from one of the gates in the morning and afternoon under nominal protection of a small covering party, and applied themselves to fill in the dry water courses, level the enclosure walls and small buildings, and overthrow the high garden walls, all the time exposed to the fire of the enemy, often within 200 or 300 yards of the work. This was notably the case on the 12th August, when the fire of the enemy, holding a looped high-walled enclosure within a distance of 150 yards of our working parties, became so galling that Lieut. Waller, Capt. Adderley, and about twenty men of the Royal Fusiliers rushed across the intervening open ground, burst through a small opening in the wall, and turned out its garrison of Herat troops and tribesmen, killing their leader and about eighty men.

About the 14th the chief sources of danger as to cover had been removed for a radius of about 700 to 800 yards, except at the south-west corner, where about 500 yards had been cleared, and it was decided that the distance the men would have to go to their work, and the too close proximity to the enemy's position, would have been too great a test of endurance, and probably too heavy a sacrifice of life. All work was stopped, as the C. R. E. considered that as much as was needful had been done.

The sallies and sorties, again in opposition to ordinary rules and regulations of siege warfare, were conducted *in open daylight* notably the main one against Deh Khwaja where not only was the attempt made in daylight but the previous bombardment had given full notice to the Afghans of the position which was to be attacked.

Furthermore, the strong patrols of cavalry moved daily out of the north front, and not only kept that front absolutely free but greatly impeded the communication between the various Afghan positions.

All these operations were conducted *in the open day* under heavy fire, and form a most perfect answer to all aspersions thrown upon the defenders of Kandahar.

## CHAPTER VI.

REPLY TO ASPERSIONS THROWN ON BOMBAY  
FIELD FORCE.

MANY friends have unceasingly pointed out that as Lord Roberts is Lord Roberts, and has written a book in which certain statements have been made by him, it is useless and hopeless to attempt to reply or dispute their correctness. Still as it is believed that the reading public in this country and the colonies are lovers of justice, the following statements are placed not only before them, but before Lord Roberts himself, in order that a quiet, dispassionate judgment on the full and detailed circumstances may be arrived at.

Fine drawn and ragged the men undoubtedly were in appearance; naturally enough from the *daily* work of demolition, etc. in the fierce August sun, and from the necessarily heavy sentinal duties entailed on a weak garrison in supervising the great extent of walling: but all were confident and cheery.

August 4th, 1880. General Phayre from Quetta reports to Headquarters:—

“I received this morning a letter from Major Adam, D.Q.M., Kandahar, dated July 29th (the day after occupation). Adam mentions a great number of townsmen (Afghan) have been turned out, etc. They hope to have a chance of defeating some of his (Ayub) forces outside, etc., etc.”

August 10th, from same. “A very cheery letter from Adam just received, dated August 5th. ‘All in *capital spirits*, and only want some guns to take the offensive.’”

August 10th. Agent Governor-General Quetta to Foreign Secretary. “General Phayre received to-day letter, dated August 5th, Kandahar. ‘The garrison have water, food, and ammunition in abundance, their defences have been strengthened, etc., the *spirits* of the troops good, and one or two *successful skirmishes* have taken place.’”



August 30th. General Phayre, Quetta, reports as follows :—

" Letter of August 26th received from Kandahar. 'Ayub had withdrawn from the investment of the City, all well.' "

From General Roberts, No. 88. The following day, August 23rd. " I heard of the sortie, and at the same time received reassuring news as to the staying powers of the garrison. That they were in no straits, etc., and that they were in good *health and spirits*."

August 26th. General Roberts received letter from Adam, D.Q.M. "*The morale of the troops is good, and supplies abundant. The enemy have, I fancy, begun to think the game is nearly up. We are very secure.*"

Hensman diary, 25th, Tirandez. " Our advanced guards and scouts on the flanks were on the watch for any signs of the enemy, but all was quiet, though a few unarmed men were met who were believed to be returning from Ayub's army to their homes ; they reported Kandahar no longer to *be besieged*, and added that all *the villages* about it were quite deserted. This news was confirmed by a number of men well-armed with rifles and swords, who had been sent out by the Wali Shere Ali to meet our army." It may be noted here that the date is the 25th, and that this Bengal Army did not arrive at Kandahar till the 31st, six days after.

So much for letters, etc., sent during the siege to Headquarters which steadily describe the garrison as in best spirits.

It is deemed necessary here, in order to draw a fair comparison between the action (already detailed) of the Bombay force, and that of the Bengal force, to detail some of the incidents occurring at Cabul in December 14th, 1879, when General Roberts had been, on the afternoon of December, forced by overwhelming numbers to retreat into the cantonments of Sherpur.

It would appear that General Roberts, on the evening of the 14th December, 1879, and even after he had (after two days' hard work) strengthened all the weak and unfinished portions of the great enclosure, was far from feeling at ease as regards his position and enforced inactivity. This uneasiness was demonstrated by his urgent summons and orders to General Charles Gough to advance at once to his assistance.

General Roberts estimated the gathering of the clans at



from 60,000 to 100,000, the latter as more correct; let us say 60,000, for Hensman says 30,000 to 40,000, afterwards as probably more. The full 100,000 might represent the total number of the combinations; but as the tribes came and went the actual number of men present at any one period, as reckoned by Hensman, would be considerably under that estimate; though quite formidable enough to retain the small British force on the defensive. General Roberts had been forced to give up to the Afghans the arsenal Bala Hissar and Cabul City.

Hensman, 15th Dec.—“The enemy have been so largely reinforced that their numbers are estimated at 40,000 men.”

“The enemy have shewn such unexpected strength; 40,000 men are believed to be present in Chardah Valley and in hills about Deh-i-Afghan.”

“As Matullah, Khan of Laughman, with his powerful sections of Ghilzais, is reported to be anxious to join Mahomed Jan with 10,000 men, and he may try to intercept the force (General Ch. Gough's) moving from Gundumuck. The Safis of Tagao, who returned to their homes yesterday afternoon before *our reverse*, will soon learn that Cabul is still in possession of Mahomed Jan, and they may also try to block the Luttabound road (against General Gough's advance).”

“That evening (11th December) we believed we had seen the full strength of the enemy, and had broken it, but after the action on the Azmai heights and the retreat of our troops to cantonments, we were undeceived. It became apparent that there were between 30,000 and 40,000 men—quite sufficient to keep us within our walls.”

What was more probable, had there arisen among this vast multitude any leader with the slightest military capacity, than that he should have equipped 20,000 men with rifles and ammunition from the arsenal, and sent them to impede General Gough's advance, harass him in his march through the defiles, and finally annihilate him and his small force.

General Roberts did not command the road of the advance of this small Brigade, and General Charles Gough's advance, in spite of dangers and difficulties, in face of the probable opposition of thousands of Afghans,\* against the

\* See Hensman, *supra*.

opinion of his own military superior, General Bright, was a gallant exploit, and one which surely deserved some further acknowledgment than the passive remarks made by General Roberts, who had received about twelve o'clock heliographs announcing Gough's arrival at Butkak, and his march thence to Logar bridge—"that some detachments were sent out by him (General Roberts) on the evening of the 23rd (as he had seen the tents of General Gough's brigade encamped within six miles of Sherpur) to destroy some villages, in order to facilitate the entry of the brigade next morning into cantonments."

General Roberts' messages were:—

On 14th December to General C. Gough—"March to Cabul as soon as you can. *It is very probable the Ghilzais will rise. Enemy number nearly 30,000 to-day. Will try to assist you on road if possible.*"

17th December—"All was well. General Roberts hoped, etc., etc., but notwithstanding the *enormous numbers* of the enemy."

20th. Through Colonel Hudson—"Order Gough to advance without delay. This order is imperative, and must be obeyed. *There is no enemy to stop him.*"

20th. From General Bright, General Gough's immediate superior—"You are not to advance to Cabul unless most stringent orders from Roberts."

General Charles Gough marched, in face of the threatened opposition of these tribesmen, the Ghilzais and Safis, with a force of about 2,000 men, slap into this combination; and as he advanced the tribesmen bolted to the hills. He arrived at Butkak at about noon, whence he could see the walls of Sherpur and of the Bala Hissar; heliographed to General Roberts, who acknowledged its receipt; but receiving no reply he again sent: "Will advance to-day on Logar bridge," four miles from Sherpur, where he arrived about 2 p.m., and there camped, in the midst of the tribesmen, having failed to obtain any instructions from General Roberts.

Lord Roberts accepts the dispersion and sudden flight of the tribesmen as entirely due to his own action in sending over the hollow between the Bamaru Heights four guns and a regiment of native Cavalry, with orders to fire upon the crowds who had collected in and about the village of

Kurza Killah, quite on the north-east corner of Sherpur, and the corner furthest from Cabul. And he considers that General Charles Gough and his force arrived too late to be of any influence. No mention is made of the enemy holding the heights about Cabul, directly in the way of the advance of General C. Gough. A military critic examining the positions and circumstances, while fully acknowledging the loss of morale on the part of the attacking Afghan force occasioned by their repulse and heavy losses, would, however, probably ascribe (as has Mr. Hensman) the dispersion to a panic among the tribesmen, caused (while they were hopelessly assaulting with all their vigour the south-eastern and eastern sides of Sherpur) by the fact becoming known of the arrival of another well-equipped British force of unknown strength within striking distance of their flank and rear, a disposition no native can face.

Hensman, 22nd December :—

“ Our spies bring in word that Mahomed Jan is reserving his strength for an attack which shall be final. He has heard, no doubt, of General Gough’s approach, and is wise enough to know that his opportunity is slipping away. The advance guard of our reinforcements is now at Luttabund.”

23rd December :—

“ About eleven o’clock, after five hours’ skirmishing, they succeeded in getting a few thousand of their most desperate followers together, and tried again to assault our lines. They were driven back more quickly than on the first occasion. Shortly after this they began to waver, and to slacken their fire, and when *their scouts reported*, as no doubt was the case, that a new force was crossing the Logar River (within four or five miles) they became a demoralized mob, seeking safety at the earliest opportunity.”

On the other hand, General Charles Gough and the men of his force naturally consider their advance in the immediate rear and flanks of the Afghan position, placing the enemy between two British forces, to have played a material part in their dispersion.

The combination of these two, the repulse of the attack by the garrison, and the advance in their immediate rear of another British force, was undoubtedly the origin of the

tribesmen's discomfiture ; but the final and rapid dispersion was greatly hastened by the exhaustion of their supplies, as it is well known that, in engaging on such expeditions, each man brings for himself eight to ten days' food and no more. Hence if, within such a time, he is successful, so much the better for him ; if not, as in this case (where a heavy lesson had been given) he disperses at once, and without any warning, to his own country.

Hensman :—

" This JEHAD has certainly been a wonderful success, and it is long since so large a number of armed men have been assembled in and about Cabul. They are likely to experience the same difficulty we have always felt—supplies. Each villager carries with him chuppaties and dried mulberries, sufficient for three or four days, but their food by now wants replenishing."

On the 22nd the exhaustion of their supplies, and the rumours of another British force having arrived close, left the tribesmen no option but to attack at once or go off. The preachings of the venerated saint and priest Muski Alum, acting on the attendant excitement of the last days of the Mohurram, aroused their courage sufficiently to cause them to make a desperate assault on the last day of the festival, and before a junction could be effected by the two British forces. Their complete failure to make any impression on the garrison was at once followed by a scramble of each man to his own home.

The simple conclusion of the above is that a small force of all arms, though ably and gallantly led, is overmatched when it has to meet an overwhelming number of fanatical tribesmen, and hence must rest on the defensive till assistance arrives. If this applied to General Roberts and his force of 7,000 effective men, how much more does it apply to the Kandahar force of under 4,000 effective men.

Lord Roberts was ill from fever on the day of his arrival at Kandahar. Though suffering from an attack of fever which would have prostrated most men, he pluckily rode at the head of his army throughout a long march and under a broiling sun into Kandahar ; and, moreover, next day, though still seriously



ill, he conducted and directed the movements of his force in their attack upon the Afghan positions. Hence when he rode into the city, he passed through a portion of it quickly, and went at once, being ill, to the quarters provided. There he remained till later on, when he left for his quarters outside. The officers and men of the garrison were during this time mostly ranged out, rather like crows, all along the city walls, holding their accustomed posts, *by the order* of the General Commanding, so that Lord Roberts had little time or opportunity of observing their demeanour; and his adverse opinion may have been engendered by the dejected and despondent attitude of the two senior Generals—both of whom deprecated his desire to have certain simple orders carried out by the men of the garrison. This impression was probably intensified by the apparent apathy, not to say discourtesy, of the reception accorded to the relieving army on its arrival at Kandahar at the end of their particularly rapid and arduous march. There were no signs of rejoicing, no demonstrations of welcome, no movement of troops from the city to greet them, and only a few senior and staff officers were permitted to go outside to welcome the coming army. The gates were all kept closed that night; and the troops were held to their posts along the city walls as rigidly as if the Bengal army were not in existence. Such action was certainly most depressing and discourteous; but here, as in many other instances, neither the officers nor the men of the garrison had any option in the matter, or any responsibility for it.

The Flag incident quoted as a special point against the Bombay Army arose simply from a quip on the part of an artillery officer. The simple facts were—As the city and provinces had been handed over to the jurisdiction of the Wali Shir Ali by General Stewart before his departure to Cabul, no British flag was set up in the city, but after the retirement into the city a search was made for one. It was only after some days that one left by the Bengal force was found among the old Bengal ordnance stores left behind, and put up over the central main gate, where it remained till General Roberts was expected; then it was transferred to the Eedgah Gate, the gate through which it was intended that



General Roberts should enter the city. But the flags of the General Commanding, as also those of the two Brigadiers, were flying the whole time. The garrison generally was too much occupied to take notice of such a matter, and probably most men engaged took little heed, and never thought about it one way or the other. Officers like General Brooke, Colonel Daubeny, Colonel Bannerman, Colonel Nimmo, Colonel Burnett, now Major-General commanding a Division at Poona, and others, were men not at all likely to acquiesce in any proceeding derogatory to the honour of the British Army.

A further cause of depreciation seized upon by the new arrivals was the fact that every man of the garrison went about fully armed.

Curiously enough, this strict order was issued by General Stewart to the Bengal troops under his command in the previous year, while he commanded at Kandahar; and was merely copied, with many others of his, by General Primrose on his relief of that force.

The abandonment of the cantonments on the early morning of the 28th, though this again can only affect the senior officers, not the men, formed another fertile source of vituperation which was even re-echoed by the Commander-in-chief of India, who of all men should have known better. The Bengal critics might have reflected that they, with a force of 7,500 men, picked officers and men (to whom, however, not a breath of calumny has been addressed) abandoned a large and populous city, Cabul, and the arsenal of Bala Hissar under pressure of circumstances, and retired into Sherpur. At Kandahar were the circumstances better? The cantonments were most extensive, were of no value, were without any water supply, and were quite undefensible, being commanded at close quarters by the Picket Hill. The city had a perimeter of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles, (6,400) yards, and contained at that time thousands of excited and disaffected Afghans. After detaching the small force of all arms under General Brooke, to move to Kokeran, some miles beyond the cantonments, in order to assist in any stragglers of the defeated brigade, there was left in place of 7,500 men, the *mighty* army of at most 1,200 Infantry, to

take possession of and hold an undefensible cantonment, a big city, and the citadel, and to keep in order the large and disaffected population within the city walls.

Yet with these facts before them, critics, some of whom were officers in high positions, were bold enough, on paper, to maintain that the cantonments should have been held.

On what possible grounds during the siege, or from what terrifying causes, should the officers and men of the garrison have become demoralized? Surely some reason should have been advanced. The dispatches already quoted \*disprove the statements made. The force was camped behind high and strong walls, round and at the foot of which had been laid down a strong entanglement of telegraph wire, to which magic powers were imputed by the ignorant countrymen. Food was in plenty, the men were well, and they had but little to do except go out and demolish walls. It was known that relieving forces were advancing, and with the hope of wiping out Maiwand, there was everything to make the men confident and cheery. The city was never invested, and the army had the power to march out and away, whenever it so pleased. The Cavalry daily patrolled and reconnoitred the front and open ground, so that no Afghans dared during daylight to move from one village to another. In the few skirmishes which took place the initiative lay always with the garrison, and they had always the best of it; while they suffered but little, they had inflicted heavy loss on the enemy. From the first, not an Afghan to frighten them was ever seen within 800 yards of the walls. The Afghans kept well under cover of high walls and deep Karezes, and never by any chance exposed themselves.

Deh Khwaja (as has been in details described) was attacked *in open daylight* by only a small force of 900 men, 600 of whom pushed through, and when they were ordered to retire out of the village did so in steady skirmishing order. Were these the efforts of demoralized troops? After the sortie a few stray shots were fired from the west and south-western sides, but all idea of further investment and attack was given up, and on the 23rd the whole of the surrounding villages for miles, excepting those on the Ayandab and Ayub's camp on

\* Page 49. See also Appendix.

the Peiwar Kotul, were evacuated and the so-called siege was raised. So that for eight days before the arrival of the Bengal Army not an Afghan was to be seen, and the garrison was free to move to Quetta or to meet General Roberts. The officers and men had nothing to do but eat, sleep and amuse themselves. No bugbear was present to act upon their fears. Were they afraid of their own shadows? There was positively nothing else.

The two senior Generals in command were unquestionably overpowered and demoralized by the responsibilities of their position; why so, it is difficult to understand. They did things they ought not to have done, and did not do things they ought to have done, *and were requested to do*. No one defends their actions, which were reprobated by none more than by the officers and men of the garrison, who were keen enough. Yet even they did not call up the garrison of Khilat-i-Ghilzai to their assistance—an addition of about 1,200 men—but left it there: to hold the country, and thus materially assist and prepare the way for the rapidity of the advance of Lord Roberts' force.

Enough surely has been said to prove how groundless the charges of demoralization are; and when the varied events and actions are reasoned out—the absurdly disproportionate small force sent out to beat Ayub—the even more inadequately small garrison left by Government to hold Kandahar—the work they accomplished, and the actions they entered into—it is trusted that public opinion will turn equally in their favour, as it has done in the case of the Bengal Army at Cabul; and that this small force will receive its due, any censure on the campaign being ascribed to the proper sources—the plans of the originators and directors of the campaign. No disparagement of any action of the Bengal troops is in any way intended. They were represented by our best troops and men, commanded by well known officers whose names are household words, but even they, from overwhelming obstacles, suffered checks, as has happened many times in history. Why then, it may be asked, were the Bombay Field Force specially singled out for reprobation who, with still smaller numbers, were asked to perform even greater and more disproportionate deeds?

Finally in juxtaposition is placed a comparison of operations of the two Armies.

## BENGAL AT CABUL.

DECEMBER, 1879.

I. The Bengal army of 7,500 men was commanded by a distinguished and experienced general, Sir F. Roberts. The next senior officers, Generals Ross, Hills, Macpherson, Baker, Macgregor, Massey, H. Gough, etc., were all well-known and tried men. The regiments had all seen service in the field. The army, in fact, was the pick of the Bengal Presidency, both in officers and men.

II. A combination of tribesmen, without any recognized leader, and without any guns, out-manceuvred and steadily drove back day, by day, General Roberts and his 7,500 men during the operations of 11th, 12th, and 13th December, 1879.

III. General Roberts is forced to retire into the strong walled and entrenched cantonments of Sherpur, which, fortunately, were in the immediate neighbourhood of the field of his operations, and untenanted by any of the enemy.

IV. The inadequacy of the strength of the force under General Roberts was due to those who at Simla controlled and directed the operations.

V. General Roberts in his enforced retirement has to abandon the City of Cabul, and the Arsenal of Bala Hissar.

VI. General Roberts had in Sherpur a place of arms of about 7,500 yards perimeter (about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles), in which had been stored guns, ammunition, and supplies, he had 7,000 effective under his orders.

## BOMBAY AT KANDAHAR.

JULY AND AUGUST, 1880.

I. The Bombay Field Force of 4,000 men was commanded by an officer weak in body and character. The two next senior generals were untried and inexperienced, and the third known to possess no military capacity. The regiments had not seen any service in the field.

II. General Burrows, with about one-third of the strength of the Bengal Army, is sent forward by the Government of India to oppose thousands of tribesmen working in concert with, and under the direction of, a Prince of Royal Blood who, moreover, commanded a well-equipped army of about 8,000 of regular as well as irregular troops, and 32 guns.

III. General Burrows, as might have been foreseen, is beaten, on which General Primrose, left with about 2,000 men, is forced to retire into the City of Kandahar.

IV. The still greater inadequacy of the force of Bombay was a still graver error on the part of the Government at Simla.

V. General Primrose has to abandon the old cantonments, which were indefensible, and from want of transport loses some of the baggage of his troops.

VI. General Primrose, with about 2,000 men, had to take possession of a city of about 6,400 yards perimeter ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles), a place full of excited and turbulent Afghans (8,000 to 10,000). The houses of the city completely dominated the interior of the walls and gates, which were taken directly in rear from the upper storeys. There were no mounted guns, and but few of any kind.



VII. General Roberts points out that his force of 7,000 effective men was not sufficient to defend and man properly the extensive perimeter of the defensive position.

General Roberts—"It will be seen that . . . the perimeter was rather too large for a force of 7,000 effective men to defend"—and again—"The great drawback to Sherpur, as I have already stated, is its extent."

VIII. General Roberts imperatively ordered General Charles Gough to advance to his assistance.

IX. General Roberts remained invested by the tribesmen from 14th to 24th December. On the 23rd on being vigorously assaulted by some thousands of the tribesmen he drove them off with heavy loss.

X. General Roberts with a picked force of about 10,000 men, to which were added the garrison of Khilat-i-Ghilzai, and further the garrison of Kandahar—approximately 5 European, and 10 Native Infantry regiments, 1 European, and 6 Native Cavalry, and 6 Batteries of Artillery—attacked the Afghans on the 1st September, and it goes without saying that he easily defeated them, inflicting a loss of about 1,200 men, and capturing also Ayub's guns and stores, especially as he was opposed by only 6 guns and the tribesmen. Ayub and his troops clearing off early in the action.

XI. On the Bengal Army praise, honours and awards have been freely bestowed.

VII. Adding the remnants of the Maiwand Brigade, and the Head Quarters of the 28th N.I., who arrived on the morning of the 28th July, General Primrose had a force of 4,000 effective men to defend a perimeter of 6,400 yards—a force still more inadequate in strength for defence.

VIII. General Primrose did not call in the garrison from Khilat-i-Ghilzai to his assistance.

IX. Kandahar was never invested. The garrison was practically unfettered in their movements. After the sortie on Deh Kwajah on the 16th August the threatened investment was practically given up. On the 23rd decidedly so—eight days before the arrival of the Bengal Army, and while they were 100 miles away.

X. General Burrows' force detailed to fight a more formidable and numerically stronger foe, assisted as they were by 32 guns, was (incredible it almost seems), composed of  $\frac{2}{3}$  of 1 European, and 2 Native regiments, 6 guns R.H.A., and about 500 sabres. He, as might have been foreseen, was overwhelmed.

XI. On the Bombay Force depreciation and censure have been lavishly showered, and now by Lord Roberts an incorrect and ungenerous statement has been quite unnecessarily published.

Verily "For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Finally, compare this action at Maiwand with General Baker's attack on the heights of Azmai, near Cabul; with Iswandula where nearly 2,000 men were annihilated by not more than 7,000 savages.

Compare it with the action at Tamai, where a British brigade of three regiments was broken and driven back in more or less disorder, to the support of a 2nd Brigade. One there writes:—"The whole regiment (42nd Highlanders) was beaten back—slowly retreated 200 or 300 yards—and all companies were mixed together." While this was going on with the 42nd, the 65th and the Marines were hotly engaged, and they, too, were slowly beaten back—three Gatling guns in charge of the naval brigade fell into the hands of the enemy. The lines of the retreat of the three regiments engaged converged somewhat to one another with the result that utter confusion resulted, Marines, 65th and 42nd all crowded together. It was at this time that the Artillery did such excellent service, practically saving the Brigade from disaster. Their front having been cleared of British troops they were able to open a deadly fire on the attacking Arabs. In the meanwhile General Buller's brigade had advanced at a double and opened a cross fire on our front. The Artillery having "cleared the air," as it were, the three regiments were able to disentangle themselves—

42nd Black Watch	19 officers	604 men
65th	14 "	421 "
Marines	14 "	464 "
Naval Brigade	3 "	66 "
<hr/>		
	50 "	1,555 "

Compare it with Abu Klea and Matamah, where 2,000 picked British troops were nearly beaten, certainly more or less demoralized, and that by not over 10,000 dervishes.

Surely then, some credit may fairly be given to men who made so gallant a stand at Maiwand, withstood for hours the concentrated and enfilading fire of thirty-two guns, and only gave

way when rushed into and overwhelmed at close quarters by numbers. Not, however, till they had inflicted a heavier loss by thousands than any acknowledged to by our leaders or by the enemy, in any of the above-mentioned actions.

To sum up, to the four members of Government and only to them (the Viceroy, the Foreign Secretary, the Commander-in-Chief, and Military Member of Council) must be attributed the checks and disasters, as also the excessive expenditure, in lives and money, which occurred in this campaign. Their want of foresight of the opposition likely to be encountered, and of appreciation of the numerical strength of the armed men in the country—their ignorance of the characteristics of the people, of their intolerance of any semblance of subjection, of their turbulent and fanatical character—their incapacity to grasp antecedent events, and to determine the requisite number of troops to be employed in order to arrive at a certain and successful result to their operations—their disregard of the advice of General Phayre, an old-experienced soldier, their rejection of the strong recommendations of the Governor of Bombay, Sir R. Temple, of the necessity of strengthening the force of Kandahar by the addition of another Brigade—and their contemptuous ideas of the numbers and of the fighting qualities of the Afghans—were one and all most conspicuously exposed throughout the Campaign.

The original force under General Roberts, sent by them to take Cabul, was quite inadequate, and its primary successes were entirely due to the energy and the brilliant performance of the General and his troops—in no way can any credit be given to those who sent them forward on such a hazardous expedition. But the climax of their incapacity was developed in the second phase of the war; when they disregarded Sir R. Temple's and General Phayre's advice to have the reserve troops (stationed then at Kurrachee) moved on at once to Quetta; when they sent the Wali of Kandahar and his 6,000 well-known mutinous and untrustworthy troops to the Helmund, to resist Sirdar Ayub Khan; when they, knowing the incredible weakness of the force at Kandahar, ordered General Burrows' Brigade (absurdly inadequate in numerical strength to contend against the enemy's) to advance to the Helmund to support the Wali;

when they left behind only 900 bayonets at most to hold the cantonments and city, the latter full of excited Afghans,—a force quite incapable of forwarding any reinforcements in support of the advanced Brigade; when they, by their strict orders, that General Burrows was not to cross the Helmund, deprived him of his sole chance of a possible successful fight against Ayub; and finally when they, though apparently giving him his option, forced him by their injunction that he was to prevent Ayub moving towards Ghuzni, to move from his camp at Kush-i-Nakud to Maiwand; and fight not only the Sirdar and his well-equipped army but countless hordes of Ghazies and tribesmen.



## APPENDIX.

## EXTRACTS FROM OFFICIAL PAPERS AND LETTERS.

4th August—General Phayre from Quetta reports : "I received this morning a letter from Major Adam, A.Q.M.G., Kandahar, dated 29th July. Details force now in citadel. He mentions that a great number of townspeople have been turned out. They have bhoosa for animals for twenty days, supplies for men for over two months. His chief anxiety was for water. They hope to have a chance of defeating some of his forces outside, and just as he wrote Colonel Phillips, Poona Horse, had cut up some men when reconnoitring outside the walls."

10th August—From same. "A very cheery letter from Adam just received dated 5th August, all in capital spirits and only want some guns to take offensive."

10th August—Government-Agent-General, Quetta (Colonel Sandeman) to Foreign Secretary, Simla. "General Phayre received to-day from Major Adam, Kandahar, dated 5th August. The garrison have water, food, and ammunition in abundance, their defences have been strengthened, buildings outside city walls destroyed, guns mounted, and every precaution made to resist attack. Spirit of troops good, and one or two successful skirmishes with villagers have taken place."

30th August.—General Phayre reports as follows : "Letter of 26th just received from Kandahar. Ayub had withdrawn from investment of city to bank of Ayhandab at Babi Wali. All well; Colonel Shewell can supply both forces, yours and General Roberts' for a month or six weeks, but forage must be sent up the line, and also the reserve supplies which are at Quetta."

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From General Sir F. Roberts, No. 88, dated Camp, Quetta, 26th September, 1880. "The following day (23rd) at Shyin, Captain Stanton was able to open heliographic communication with Khilat-Ghilzai by this means. I heard of the sortie which had been made from Kandahar on the 16th August, and at the same time I received reassuring news as to the staying powers of the garrison; that they were in no straits for supplies, for troops and followers; that they were all in good health and spirits. Shortly after arrival at Robat, General Gough was met by Lieutenant-Colonel St. John, Resident and Major Adam, A.Q.M.G., at Kandahar. From the information brought by these officers, and

from what I heard from other sources, I was led to believe that Ayub Khan intended to make a stand and was strengthening his position (this was Ayub's third camp), which was said to extend from Gundigan to Kotal-i-Murcha. Upon receipt of these news I determined to halt a day at Robat, and divide the remaining distance to Kandahar (nineteen miles) into two short marches, soldiers, followers, and transport animals were much fagged by the long and continuous marching, and somewhat exhausted by the now daily increasing heat."

23rd or 24th August.—Roberts received a letter from Major Adam, A.Q.M.G., from Kandahar, dated 17th August. "Ayub's forces dislodged by our guns from camp close to Gourkha lines. (first camp of Ayub); have taken ground between their Bazaar and Ayhandab (this was Ayub's second camp). The villages all round are held as well as a position of our old cantonments, some of the regulars cantoned in the villages, which contains besides very large contingents of outsiders. Yesterday morning, hoping to get into Deh-Kwaja to pull down loop-holes and walls facing Cabul and Bardarani gates, we made a sortie with 300 Cavalry, 900 Infantry, drawn from 7th Fusiliers, 19th and 28th Mounted Regiments, the village was found to be strongly held and heavily barricaded with loop-holes, our Infantry managed to push through, but could not gain a hold upon the place, though the enemy's supports got a good slating from our Cavalry, Artillery and Infantry fire. We had to get back to the walls of the city under a heavy fire from the village walls, and our loss was heavy in officers, the enemy must have seen that we have some fighting power left in us, and we heard the regular regiments would not turn out to reinforce the village, so that an effect has been produced, and the morale of our troops is good, our supplies are abundant, the enemy have I fancy begun to think the game nearly up. We are very secure. You may imagine their chance of success is very small. They ran away like hares yesterday when our Cavalry got them into the open, and also when the retiring Sappers turned round and gave them a volley."

Hensman, 25th August, Tirandiz:

"Our advanced guard and scouts on the flank were on the watch for any signs of the enemy, but all was quiet, though a few unarmed men were met who were believed to be returning from Ayub's army to their homes. They reported Kandahar no longer to be beseiged, and said that all the villages were deserted. This news was confirmed by a number of men well mounted and armed with rifles and swords who had been sent out by the Wali Shere Ali to meet our army."

It may be here noted that General Roberts arrived at Kandahar on the 31st.



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